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POPULAR CULTURE, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND RACE IN  
THE CARIBBEAN\*

IDENTITY LOST OR IDENTITY FOUND?

The idea that the cultural identity of Caribbean peoples is somehow problematic has been around for so long and been upheld by such a variety of writers that it has become almost an axiom. Certainly, at least some of the apprehension about Caribbean identity is founded in an insidious racism that eventually came to justify the continued subjugation of an African slave labor force in the New World. It is easy on this account to dismiss the doubting remarks of observers like the historian of the Jamaican Maroon wars, Dallas, who, in his book published in the early nineteenth century, asserted that "the notion of a free, active, negro republic does not seem to have any reasonable foundation" (cited in Lewis 1983:106). On similar grounds, one might disregard Froude's (1888: 287) convinced assertion nearly a century after: "Give them independence, and in a few generations they will peel off such civilization as they have learnt as easily and as willingly as their coats and trousers."

It is less easy to dismiss the considered opinions of more recent scholars who point to other peculiar features of Caribbean identity. Michael

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Horowitz (1971: 5), for instance, notes that "West Indian nationalism as it emerged after the Second World War differed from the early nationalisms of Ireland, India and the Arab lands, and the contemporary nationalisms of Africa and other parts of Asia, in its general avoidance of nativism and the evocation of its own past. The metropolitan colonial country remains the model of intellectual excellence in the Caribbean." Such an observation is less easily dismissed because it speaks to seemingly unarguable empirical observations: the apparent reluctance to break the colonial connection in some parts of the Caribbean-Puerto Rico and the French Antilles, for example – and the continued dependence on the metropolis even in those countries of the region that have attained political independence.

An incident drawn from newspaper accounts in the Second World War might help drive home the point Horowitz makes. The British Colonial Office in 1940 invited a delegation of newspaper journalists from the West Indian colonies to London to observe the war effort from the vantage point of its command center; it was, presumably, a public relations effort to garner further support for the war in the colonies. In one of those ironies of the colonial experience, the six noticeably non-white editors in the group, who were in a few days to meet Prime Minister Churchill himself, were refused accommodations en route in Bermuda in a fourth class hotel while their 'white' colleagues were put up overnight at the island's finest. Writing in the press to protest their treatment, one of the newspapermen declared: "I was profoundly shocked to find on landing in Bermuda that there is one place in the Empire where the fight for democracy and all it stands for is considered of secondary importance."<sup>1</sup> The basis of his outrage was as a loyal subject to the Crown. The noted Caribbean author, V.S. Naipaul (1972: 311), holds that: "Nothing was generated locally; dependence became a habit," while David Lowenthal (1972), a careful student of the region, suggests that West Indians are lacking in self-confidence.

Indeed, not only is the collective consciousness of Caribbean peoples held to be insecurely founded, some of the most influential models of these societies (especially those colonized by the British, Dutch, and French) posit that they are a patchwork of not-yet-sewn together fragments. Herskovits' fixation on an Afro-American cultural universe, and M.G. Smith's description of distinct plural social segments, are cases in point.

The creolization process through which a distinctive cultural and national identity is forged has long been felt to be more advanced in the Hispanophone Caribbean. Scholars point, for instance, to the ascendancy of the Spanish language in marked contrast with the multi-lingual and diglossic speech communities in other parts of the Caribbean. Yet even in the Hispanophone areas the identity question has not been unproblematic. As will be shown

later, these societies continue to be uncomfortable about the position of those of darker skin color and of African cultural retentions within the wider national entity. It has been a thorny problem as much for novelists and poets as it has been for the societies as a whole, as José Alcántara shows in his review of Dominican literature in this issue.

Nor has the issue of race been the only factor seen as threatening to cultural identity in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. In his *Requiem por una cultura* Eduardo Seda Bonilla (1970) laments that Puerto Rican values of family and community life, the rich popular poetic and philosophical tradition, and much else are in imminent danger of being lost in the face of Puerto Rico's incorporation into the United States imperial sphere.

Recently, however, the tenor of discussion has shifted from musings over whether Caribbean culture exists at all to a dialogue among Caribbean voices about the nature of Caribbean culture, positing models ranging from plantations and plural society to the more recent creole society model advanced by scholars such as Edward Braithwaite and R.T. Smith. As Nigel Bolland (1987) has noted, the concept of creole society "is the antithesis of the old imperialist viewpoint that denies the 'natives' a history of their own and asserts that nothing of any cultural value was ever produced in the Caribbean." The creole society model thus reflects and enhances emerging Caribbean nationalism by giving new emphasis to the importance of African traditions.

The creole society model draws attention to an evolving cultural unity in the Caribbean based upon the continuous process of interaction and adjustments between the major cultural traditions of Europe and Africa. Yet this unity can be realized only after the existing cultural hegemony of Europe (and the United States) is overthrown and the vitality of African traditions is recognized. The failure to recognize the importance of African culture is due, according to Brodber, to the Eurocentric orientation of the Caribbean elite. All three of the authors in this issue suggest in various ways how the presumed ambiguities of Caribbean cultural identity are less a reflection of an ill-formed culture than an indication of multi-ethnic, class stratified societies whose elites have continued to deny recognition to their own "folk" culture.

On another level, the differences of interpretation have to do with how the concept of culture is being used. In Seda Bonilla's *Requiem* at least part of the author's despair comes from his not recognizing the dynamic quality of culture. By contrast, Angel Quintero Rivera, in his essay in this issue, perceives clearly that it is because of this dynamic quality that Puerto Rican culture has been able to make for viable adjustment to new settings.

Indeed, precisely because they were primarily slave societies in which slave participation in public institutions and many other overt forms of cultural

expression were discouraged, the cultural system that did emerge in the Caribbean has a surreptitious quality that challenges our skills of social observation and analysis (see Mintz & Price 1976). With Brodber's and Quintero Rivera's articles which stress continuity and adaptability, we have further corroboration of a perspective that has been developing in the past few years and which identifies innovation in artistic form, option building and flexibility in economic pursuits and social relations as pivotal cultural principles in Caribbean life (Carnegie 1982). Anthropologist Lee Drummond (1980) has even gone so far as to suggest a theory of "intersystems" that would account for the multiplicity of cultural symbols put together from seemingly distinct cultural/ethnic groups which people in the Caribbean routinely plug into. Drummond suggests that Caribbean culture works much like creole languages do. He argues, based on Derek Bickerton's work on Guyanese Creole, that the approach, borrowed from structural linguistics, which sees cultures and languages as discrete, rule-governed systems is inappropriate for understanding creole systems in which speakers habitually employ different sets of grammatical rules from both the standard and the creole language.

So, too, in Caribbean culture, Drummond suggests, the long history of interaction between various ethnic groups has led to a continuum of physical features and a blurring of group boundaries. In these societies what would otherwise be regarded as bounded systems are all part of a larger cultural system in which transformations routinely occur between one and another 'subsystem'. Adjustment and adaptability are key elements of the system and people are accustomed to cultural symbols that appear ambiguous to the outsider only because their meaning shifts according to social context.

It is fitting, then, that we are now beginning to recognize more clearly that one of the very features of Caribbean culture that seemingly gives evidence of its insecure foundation is in fact a root principle of the system that has served the social needs of these oppressed peoples most effectively.

#### ROOTS OF CARIBBEAN IDENTITY

What, may we ask, are the reasons behind this new-found confidence in the viability and validity of Caribbean culture? What has happened in the post-war period to foster a new sense of Caribbean nationhood and cultural self-awareness?

Several post-war events have helped to stimulate the development of cultural nationalism in the Caribbean, including the independence of the nations in the Anglophone Caribbean, migration, the black power movement in the United States, and the Cuban revolution. However, we shall argue that,

for historical reasons, the concept of national identity has evolved quite differently in the Anglophone and Hispanophone Caribbean although they share a common history of colonialism and plantation slavery. In particular, it would seem that race has played a more important role in the formation of national identity in the Anglophone Caribbean, than in the Hispanophone islands, as we shall see below.

### THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

Race is now a cornerstone of national identity in the Anglophone Caribbean, manifested in a new interest in Afro-Caribbean culture in popular music, dance, and religion as well as hair styles, dress, names, etc. However, as Brodber notes, this comparatively new interest marks for the elite a decided shift from the Eurocentric orientation of the past.

The roots of this Eurocentric orientation go back to a creole colonial society which assigned all racial and ethnic groups a rank order within a system of sharp status differentiation. Creole society was in turn based on the highly hierarchical and absolutist rule of slave plantations, which strove to strip blacks (and later indentured laborers from Asia) of their cultural heritage and impose European notions of white racial superiority upon them. As R.T. Smith (1967) has noted, creole society was rooted in the political and economic dominance of the metropolitan power, was color-stratified, and was integrated around the concept of the moral and cultural superiority of things English.

The nature of race relations in the colonial society of the Anglophone Caribbean has to be understood in terms of power. With the full development of the plantation system, blacks far outstripped the small white planter class on most of the islands. With the exception of Barbados this planter class was largely absentee, and never developed a strong Creole orientation (Knight 1978). In order to maintain control under these conditions, the dominant planter class excluded blacks from any form of political participation in the society. Even freemen were denied basic rights such as property-ownership, voting or office holding because of fear of any black political base. An intermediate mulatto buffer group, as developed in the Hispanophone Caribbean, emerged very slowly, and like the planter class, was thoroughly oriented toward European values and culture. Nevertheless, this mulatto group was never really accepted into white colonial society, with its strong racist bias, and only succeeded in alienating itself from the black masses. This weakened the development of a sense of national identity in the Anglophone Caribbean and led to a cultural split between the brown elite and the black

masses, who retained strong elements of African identity and culture. This split formed the basis for the continuing struggle today described by Brodber between official, elite culture and popular culture in the Anglophone Caribbean.

By denying their African heritage and emphasizing their cultural whiteness over a nationalist image, the mulatto Creole elite lacked an alternative ideology on which they could build a separate style of life in opposition to that of the colonial power. This elite was frightened by figures like Marcus Garvey, who appealed to black nationalism, and they resisted any appeal to racial solidarity as a basis for national identity. The weak nationalist sentiment of this elite helps explain why the Anglophone Caribbean did not achieve independence until the 1960's.

Why, then, do we now see an apparent change in favor of racial solidarity and black pride in the Anglophone Caribbean? Though political independence has not led to economic or cultural autonomy, it has forced the Creole elite to turn to the black masses as a political constituency rather than sharply differentiating themselves as they did previously. They must shed the old symbols of colonial rule and replace them with new national symbols which incorporate the people. Although Brodber tells us that some politicians in Jamaica preferred to downplay racial issues, they could not continue to govern on the basis of their cultural "whiteness." Since colonial society had presumed the superiority of European culture, the elites of these newly independent states were expected to reject such a notion in favor of the affirmation of "black" cultural identity. In much of the Anglophone Caribbean, "blackness" itself has come to symbolize nationhood. Where, as in Trinidad and Guyana, an important part of the population is of East Indian origin, it proves to be much harder to reach a consensus on the symbols of national identity.

Another reason for the renewed interest in Afro-Caribbean culture in the Anglophone Caribbean is the political independence of many African states in the post-war period. Brodber notes that as these African countries shed their colonial ties and took part in Third World political fora, they served increasingly as points of identification for Caribbean peoples anxious to recover their African past. The civil rights and black power movement in the U.S. had similar consequences. The new self-confidence with which black Americans viewed themselves was reflected in the Caribbean, particularly among migrants who had participated in these movements (Sutton & Makiesky 1975). The interest in civil rights and black power in the U.S. is only one of the ways migration has increased the racial consciousness of the Caribbean population.

One could argue that there is greater convergence between official and

popular culture now than in the past in the Anglophone Caribbean, with wider acceptance of Afro-Caribbean patterns of speech and dress, and a renewed appreciation of Afro-Caribbean cultural forms in music, dance and even religion. Brodber reminds us of the pivotal role played by Rastafarianism in maintaining black consciousness in Jamaica, and of its importance in the revival that the "Culture of Dread" is now undergoing throughout the Anglophone Caribbean. As she notes, the recognition in Jamaica of the late singer and composer, Bob Marley, as a national hero is one manifestation of this important shift away from a European orientation of the elite toward an Afro orientation of the folk.

### THE HISPANOPHONE CARIBBEAN

In the Hispanophone Caribbean, the sense of national identity is based less on race, than on language, religion, and other aspects of Spanish culture. As in the Anglophone Caribbean, cultural disengagement from the mother country was never complete, despite the breaking of political and economic ties. This Spanish heritage included the superiority of white skin and European culture, but in the Hispanic Caribbean, racial divisions were never as strong as in the Commonwealth Caribbean (Knight 1978). In part, this is due to the later development of sugar plantations in the Hispanic Caribbean and to the lesser numerical importance of black slaves as a percentage of the total population. By the time slaves were imported in great numbers into Cuba and Puerto Rico in the 19th century, they could be incorporated into an already developing creole culture, in which a free colored class played an important part.

The idea of racial and cultural synthesis as a basis for societal integration in Puerto Rico emerged on the *hacienda*, which, as Quintero Rivera writes, "fostered a paternalistic conception of the fatherland (*patria*) as an all embracing family: a stratified family under the control of the "*padre de agrego*" – the *hacendado* – but family nonetheless." Quintero Rivera's article in this issue notes how in Puerto Rico this paternalistic social order of the *hacienda* tried to incorporate artisan workers and slaves into this sense of family, thereby weakening the development of class and racial solidarity. Contemporary politicians like the late Governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Muñoz Marín, have continued to utilize the notion of "la gran familia puertorriqueña" to great advantage in their effort to build multi-class coalitions on the island.

It would seem that the anti-state, anti-urban ethos which Quintero Rivera analyzes in Puerto Rico is present not only in the working class, but among



*hacendados* as well. In the nineteenth century they struggled against onerous Spanish state regulations that hampered their commercial development, which was symbolized in the struggle between Ponce, governed by *hacendados*, and San Juan, the center of Spanish bureaucracy on the island. *Hacendados* led the opposition to Spanish rule, but were seriously weakened by the American occupation of 1898. In their defense against this new and far more powerful form of colonialism, the Puerto Rican elite – including many of the Puerto Rican intelligentsia – have sought refuge in the evocation of a real or imagined rural past, based on the 19th century *hacienda* social order. Thus, the celebration of rural life, through the *jíbaro* or *la isla* in Puerto Rico not only represents freedom from state control for the working class (embodied in the 18th century concept of *cimarronería* or marronage) but nostalgia for the lost world of the 19th century *hacienda*, in which a creole elite held local hegemony and formed the basis of national identity. Today Puerto Rico's national identity is severely threatened by United States' political and economic domination and cultural penetration. This has led the Puerto Rican intelligentsia to reaffirm their Spanish or Creole roots – often symbolized by the rural world of the *hacienda* – as a defense against U.S. cultural imperialism (see Díaz-Quinones 1987).

Cuba presents an interesting study for national identity, because of its political as well as cultural uniqueness. Many Caribbean scholars (e.g. Knight 1978, Mintz 1984, Lewis 1983) maintain that Cuba had the most developed sense of cultural identity and nationhood in the area, in part due to its protracted and bloody struggle against Spain from 1868–1878. It also has a strong Afro-Caribbean culture, replenished by the importation of *antillanos* from Jamaica and other Anglophone islands during the latter part of the 19th century and Haitians in the early 20th century. Now, how is Cuba dealing with the question of cultural identity under socialism?

Fidel Castro has publicly pronounced that Cuba is an Afro-Latin country. Critics claim this is only rhetoric that Castro is using to promote his ties with African nations and his legitimacy as a Third World leader. For example, Bénitez Rojo (1984) claims that Afro-Cuban culture is repressed in Cuba, and no longer enjoys cultural vitality. Barnet (1980) and others maintain that Afro-Caribbean culture is thriving in Cuba, that it is no longer a culture of defense or rebellion, but a symbol of national pride. Surely a socialist revolution such as Cuba has experienced can no longer seek its cultural identity in a patriarchal social order of the past. As Mintz has suggested, socialism does permit it to repudiate colonialism and the superiority of "white" culture without raising the question of race on its own and directly. But it must still find another basis for social unity, one in which Afro-Caribbean culture will hopefully not be subsumed under a new form of

domination as in the past. Yet, the fact remains that the Cuban revolution gave new impetus to the search for national identity in other areas of the Caribbean (see González Echevarría 1980), strengthening the hand of the Caribbean intelligentsia who sought to reaffirm national values in opposition to U.S. cultural and economic domination.

Because of its proximity to Haiti and bitter memory of Haitian occupation, racist attitudes in the Dominican Republic are said to have been particularly strong. In fact, the Dominican sense of nationhood has been formed in opposition to the "black" republic of Haiti, and it has historically defined itself as white, Catholic and Spanish (Moya Pons 1981). In 1937, during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, thousands of Haitians were massacred. After the dictatorship, the country suffered from bitter civil strife and a subsequent U.S. occupation.

The fall of Trujillo in 1961 signalled a cultural renaissance in which, according to Alcántara, sociopolitical questions dominated, but the old thesis of the black's inferiority was also debated and revised. One of the most significant results is a new generation of black Dominican writers depicting Afro-Caribbean culture as they see it, as opposed to the largely white perspective of the past.

Mintz (1984) has suggested that the apparent ease with which blacks and other racial and ethnic groups were absorbed into the Hispanic Caribbean points to the validity of an "assimilation model" rooted in the vitality of the local creole culture. The assimilation model provided a framework for racial and cultural synthesis, but on the basis of a paternalistic social order. The greatest challenge to this assimilation model in the Dominican Republic now comes from two sources: massive Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic, primarily as sugarcane laborers, and large scale Dominican emigration to the United States. Given the traditional hostility toward Haitians and the fear of being overrun by blacks, Haitian immigration may be contributing to a heightened emphasis on Spanish ideology in the official culture and among part of the intellectual elite. Spanish culture has also received renewed emphasis as a result of the cultural activities surrounding the *Quincentario*, celebrating 500 years of Columbus' entry into the New World, of special importance to the island of Hispaniola (of which the Dominican Republic is part) since it was his first settlement. On the other hand, Dominicans who have emigrated to the U.S. are experiencing a new form of black racial consciousness resulting from their discrimination in the U.S. *as a group* for the first time (Moya Pons 1981). It will be interesting to see whether the assimilation model can withstand these challenges, which pull it in opposite directions, or whether the concept of racial and cultural synthesis will be questioned in the Dominican Republic as well.

## CONCLUSION: CULTURAL POLICY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Undoubtedly, the search for national identity in the Caribbean is made more acute by the massive exposure to the U.S. in the current period. This exposure is facilitated by Caribbean migration to the U.S., particularly the circulatory type which is increasingly the norm in most areas. Some scholars feel migration will only result in deculturation and a loss of cultural identity, while others argue that it may be contributing to the cultural revitalization and increased recognition of the Afro-Caribbean heritage in the region. The intense debate among Puerto Rican scholars on the validity of a "separate" Nuyorican culture is illustrative of the problem. For Juan Flores, for example, Nuyorican culture is no mere offshoot of the island, but a new cultural expression with its roots on the island (Juan Flores *et al.* 1981).

With the exception of Puerto Rico and possibly Cuba, Caribbean governments have tended to ignore the impact of migration on the cultural identity and even socio-economic structure of the sending society. In the Dominican Republic, for example, the official view tends to regard most migrants as poor folk, whose loss does not represent a great drain to the society. Their only value is seen in the large-scale remittances in U.S. dollars which help to bolster the nation's faltering economy. This view is obstinately upheld, despite an increasing number of studies (e.g. Bray 1984) documenting the urban, middle class nature of the migration, not only from the Dominican Republic, but also from other Caribbean areas.

The other threat to cultural identity in the contemporary Caribbean is the massive influence of the U.S. mass media. While this influence is not new to the region, it has grown with the increasing technical sophistication of these media manifest in satellite broadcasting, home video viewing, cable TV and other electronic devices. The cost of this new technology has put it beyond the reach of most small producers, including local governments in the Commonwealth Caribbean who are increasingly forced to rely on relay transmissions, with the result that 85 percent of all programming originates outside the area (Brown 1983).

There is a real danger that the massive cultural penetration by foreign mass media will suffocate such resurgent forms of Afro-Caribbean culture as described by Brodber and Alcántara. Political leaders in the Caribbean seem unconcerned with this threat to their cultural identity.

Yet it is clear that the Caribbean can no longer turn exclusively to Europe or the United States for its cultural models. It must look to its own Afro-Caribbean roots to nourish indigenous forms. In this search, cultural policy can play a critical role in encouraging the development of indigenous forms of popular culture and in revealing the racist and Eurocentric bias in the models of the past.

In this brief essay, we have tried to point out some of the major issues with which such a cultural policy must deal. It must pay more attention to the historical roots of cultural identity in the Caribbean with particular emphasis on the Afro-Caribbean contribution which has been so long neglected in both the Anglophone and Hispanophone areas. It must examine the impact of major events such as the Cuban revolution (and conversely the Grenada invasion) on Caribbean people's sense of self-worth and self-awareness. And it must look at the changes which migration and the mass media are bringing about in the Caribbean concept of nationhood and national identity.

#### NOTE

1. *The voice of St. Lucia*, for example, carried several items about the incident. The citation is from a letter published in *The Voice* of November 13, 1941 from the editor of the *Barbados Advocate Paper*.

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## THE RURAL-URBAN DICHOTOMY IN THE FORMATION OF PUERTO RICO'S CULTURAL IDENTITY

"Voy a cantar la vida campesina,  
ser jíbaro es orgullo de Borinquen,  
ver crecer el ganao en la colina,  
y que el cadillo y el moriviví me hinquen<sup>1</sup>."  
*Haciendo punto en otro son*, 1974

"... el zum zum de los mosquitos  
y el pío pío de los pollitos  
no me dejan descansar<sup>2</sup>."  
*La sonora ponceña*, 1976

Like most contemporary Caribbean societies, Puerto Rico is now overwhelmingly urban. The 1980 Population Census classifies as urban nearly 70% of inhabitants (and this, obviously, does not include the hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans living in urban areas of the United States and maintaining important ties with "the Island"). For that same year the agricultural work-force was only 4.9% of total employment, and agriculture contributed less than 4% of the total gross national product.

Puerto Rico's rural-agricultural world is practically dead. Nevertheless, in the 70s, songs like "La vida campesina", from which the first quotation above is taken, received considerable popular acclaim. Why does singing to an almost non-existent world gets to be so popular? How can we explain the idealized persistence of a world which is no longer lived?... or does it live in some ways?<sup>3</sup>

This paper tries to outline, through preliminary notes, the changing meanings of the urban-rural dichotomy in Puerto Rico and the cultural significance of the relationship between country and city.

## THE FORTIFICATION CITY AND THE RUNAWAYS

It is common in Puerto Rico to refer to "the Island" as the opposite of San Juan. In colloquial language "the Island" is simply the rest of the country. One is either from San Juan or from "the Island." If one is in San Juan and going to any other part of the country, one says that one is going "to the Island."

The "Island" is also usually identified with the mountains, while coastal plains and valleys form a considerable part of the country. A few years ago, I participated in the funeral of the nationalist hero Andrés Figueroa-Cordero in his hometown of Aguada, a municipality on the west coast. All the eulogies referred to this "jíbaro de la montaña" (mountain peasant), yet in Aguada there are no mountains. How did the mountains come to represent the "Island", and the "Island", the country, in contradistinction to the city? How did a type of rural land become the symbol of national identity? Faced with an overwhelming contrasting reality, which classes have tried to maintain this symbol and which have challenged it?

The cultural significance of the rural-urban dichotomy is at the core of the formation process of our national cultural identity. The first important distinction between the rural and urban worlds emerged in the first three centuries of European colonization of the Caribbean.

Both the descriptions of our first chroniclers and the information gathered by archaeologists point to the fact that the Indians in the Caribbean lived in communities ("Yucayekes") (Colón Vázquez 1974; Morison, 1963). For the communitarian mode of production on which this social formation was based, the isolated peasant dwelling made no sense. European colonization (through Spanish *encomiendas* and British and French plantations) destroyed this social formation, and with it the significance of villages. Defeated by the Europeans and faced not only by forced labor, but also by the destruction of their society, many Amerindians tried to run away, hiding in the islands' interior.

The rich material attraction of other Spanish areas in America did not foster the economic colonization of Puerto Rico. The island's economy, in contrast to British and French Caribbean colonies, was thus very weak during its first three centuries of settlement. The military-strategic importance of Puerto Rico for the Spanish empire turned San Juan, nonetheless, into an extremely well-kept fortification city. This garrison was subsidized by the metal-rich colonies, particularly México, as it was mainly a defense and drinking water supplier for vessels between Spain and México.

Some social scientists have characterized Caribbean societies as plantation societies and have argued that the basic common cultural feature in our

fundamental first centuries of existence is black slavery. They are correct, but only partially so. Rather one should see plantation slavery from the perspective of the dialectical contradictions it contained within it: plantation and counter-plantation; slavery and *cimarronería* (marronage). Our truly common cultural backbone is this dialectical tension. Due to our position within European expansion, the tension between plantation and counter-plantation was always present throughout the Caribbean. Some societies, like Cuba, encompassed both types of these counter social formations within itself; others, like Barbados, were mainly plantation islands, and others, counter-plantation societies, which is what I would like to argue for Puerto Rico (outside San Juan) until the 18th century. This brings us back to the main theme of this essay.

The urban-rural dichotomy is intertwined with the plantation-counter-plantation tension in Caribbean cultural history. The *cimarrón* or runaway social formation involved two related aspects: the (economic) opposition to slave work and the (political) opposition to State rule.<sup>4</sup> And in colonial Latin America the State was mostly represented by the city.

With the exception of San Juan in the northeast and the village of San Germán in the southwest, the rest of the island of Puerto Rico was, for decades, populated by people that were escaping for some reason: by runaways, in the ample sense used, for example, by the great Cuban novelist Carpentier (1957: 69). Some of these runaways were Indians, fleeing from the serfdom of the *encomiendas* to the point that in the 18th century to live isolated in the mountains and hills was said to be "living like indians" (e.g. Iñigo 1959: 185), when, as mentioned earlier, the settlement pattern of the Taino social formation was absolutely opposite to this. Other runaways might have been slaves, fleeing the plantations of the neighboring British or French islands. But the runaways could also have been Spaniards, who for different reasons were aiming to live outside the jurisdiction of the State.

It should not be forgotten that the Spanish colonization of America was beginning just at the time when Jews and Moors were being expelled from the Iberian peninsula. There existed great State hostility and repression against them, which was manifested in the Inquisition and the "limpieza de sangre" procedure (racial analysis of ancestors) before appointment to government posts, participation in municipal governing boards and many other instances of State action. After so many centuries of a large Jewish and Moorish presence in Spain, 'racial' intermixture was considerable, and faced with such an official climate of repression, it is natural to assume that many Spaniards, having some Jewish or Moorish ancestry, would be fearful of the Spanish State and would try to emigrate to America in order to seek a less oppressive presence of the State.<sup>5</sup> Puerto Rico was the first port of call. The



Arab background of an important segment of our *cimarronería* is evident in the music that this social formation produced (Alvarez, 1979), a point to which we shall return later. Eighteenth century documents stress also the incorporation of Spanish stowaways and deserters into this rural world (e.g. Iñigo 1959: 133; O'Reilly, 1965.<sup>6</sup>

Counter-plantation cultures in the Caribbean vary in terms of the nature of the presence of their opposite. In countries with strong slave plantation economies, the counter-plantation is a menace, because it becomes attractive as an alternative for working slaves. For that reason runaways are fiercely pursued, and runaway societies attacked. The runaways form villages (*palenques*) for mutual defense and for the organization of an alternative, but besieged, existence. In societies of weak plantation economies, but with a strong garrison city, marronage is the opposite of retreating in active opposition. The urban military will not perceive the rural world as a menace but as a world of primitive indolence. The runaways do not feel a need to organize, and their anti-urban nature hampers the formation of *palenques*. This type of counterplantation society is characterized by isolated family dwellings based on a family-based petty mode of production in subsistence agriculture. Shifting cultivation gave this form of life a seminomadic nature. The runaways shared this type of economy and sought a retreat from the sphere of State jurisdiction or influence. It was, basically, a natural economy, the opposite of the plantation commercialism. It developed, nonetheless, in an epoch and region of growing international trade. Marronage commerce was channeled, outside State jurisdiction, through smuggling, whose importance is emphasized over and over again in reports and descriptions of the period.

For this rural world, the city represented the State: it represented that which one had to retreat from. The city was the garrison, the world of officialdom, which in Puerto Rico meant mainly the military. But the city had, of course, also dwellers with other occupations. Among these the artisans were important. The artisans formed a social class, and acted as such, by the late nineteenth century; we will come back to them later. Here it is useful to mention that these artisans, mostly mulattos and tawny moors,<sup>7</sup> provide the only bridges of social communication between the distinct worlds of the fortification city and the *cimarronería*. In 1728 and 1729, urban officialdom was shaken by the growing power of tawny-moor Miguel Enriquez, the son of a shoemaker from a village adjacent to San Juan. As a corsair and privateer, he held control over the non-urban force, facilitating smuggling, through which he became one of the richest persons in the Caribbean. With fear, jealousy and distrust, the "Dones" of the fortification city launched the juridical force of the State against this threat to their power,

in order (a chronicle says) "that he will end his life in the low fortune of its birth bed" (Miyares, 1775: 17).

#### THE "ESTANCIEROS" TOWNS

By the beginning of the 18th century Puerto Rico had only three towns. By mid-century there were nine, but in the second half of the century twenty-six new towns were founded, and twenty-six more emerged in the first half of the 19th century.<sup>8</sup> What was happening in Puerto Rico which can help us explain this sudden florescence of urban presence in the countryside? What effects did this have on the cultural significance of the urban-rural relationship?

The town-foundation boom of the second half of the 18th century coincides with changes in Spanish imperial policies intent on transforming Puerto Rico from a dependent colony to a productive one. This transformation became the more necessary when in the last decades of that century the Mexican subsidy came to an end and, even more so, with the end of the Empire through the Independence wars of the second and third decade of the 19th century. Commercial agriculture was fostered, along with greater institutional penetration that would facilitate the collection of taxes and guarantee the use of official channels for trade. European farmer immigration was stimulated and Crown land was offered for commercial agriculture. It was mainly these farmers ("*estancieros*"), who founded most of the new towns (Morales Muñoz 1944: 12-13; also 1943, 1946 and 1948).

These towns represented the State in the rural areas, with a church, a military post, and with a military official from among the residents, who also served as mayor and judge. He was also in charge of collecting taxes and of organizing the voluntary militia. Only ten propertied residents were needed to present a petition for the official establishment of a town.

The primary source documents quoted at length by Morales Muñoz (1948: 259; 1944: 193) refer to a preoccupation with possible opposition to these towns. But this opposition never materialized. The runaway world of Puerto Rico's first peasantry was extremely vulnerable and contradictory. Its challenge was that of escape, not of attack. It sought to live outside the State's jurisdiction, not because of active opposition to the State, but because it did not wish to be subordinated to it.

Eighteenth century descriptions (Iñigo, Miyares, Ledrú), all emphasize the peasant's love of freedom, but it was the freedom of retreat. Retreat expressed a feeling of inferiority. For a Christian with some Moorish ancestry in Cadiz in 1492 there was nothing worse than his Moorish ancestry; the Spaniards were the conquerors and the Indians the defeated; black was

identified with the slave plantation, the opposite of marronage. Therefore, the State, the world from which one is retreating, not because it is bad, but because it has beaten you, acquired clear racial overtones and a evident "racial" identification. At the same time, there was a contradictory attempt at a non-Statist Hispanization, through the development of popular religious practices and "the betterment of race" (*mejorar la raza*) i.e. trying to get whiter offspring. (See Quintero Rivera 1987). An eighteenth century chronicle describes the ease with which hinterland peasants gave their daughters in marriage to poor white stowaways and deserters, so as to get a white family. Iñigo adds that though most creoles are tawny-moors, "they show pride in their Spanish origin" (Iñigo 1959: 182; see also Moralex Muñoz 1946: 116-117). The foundation of a town was then seen as an advance for this rural world, because the sacraments would "hispanicize" you. To die as an infidel was at least an indiscretion in this contradictory social formation.

In spite of the foundings of a growing number of Spanish churches, work and daily life remained basically rural. Towns were very small and during the day they were usually empty (Iñigo 1959: 122; Miyares 1951: 88). The sort of urban life of the small town became associated with the special occasion: a wedding, baptism, patron Saint holidays, some important economic transaction. In this way, small town life became idealized. People lived in the country, but if possible had also a town house for these special celebrations (Picó 1986: 112). The best clothing was set aside for going to town.

This positive evaluation of small-town life persisted in areas of independent small-holder agricultural production even during the first half of the 20th century. (Meléndez Muñoz 1936).

#### PONCE, THE SEIGNEURIAL CITY

The nineteenth century was characterized in Puerto Rico by the emergence of commercial agriculture, as the moving force of the island's economy. This type of agriculture reached its maximum development with the capitalist plantation in the early twentieth century, but its foundations were laid in the nineteenth. The percentage of cultivated acres dedicated to commercial crops increased from 30% in 1827 to 65% in 1899 (in 1920 it was to reach 80%). Cultivated land increased from 5.8% to 14.3% in this period (in 1920 it would surpass 30%). A strong process of primitive accumulation was also under way and the proportion of landowners' families was reduced by half from 1830 to 1899 (from 46.6% of families to less than 25%).

In other writings I have tried to explain this process and the contradictory *hacienda* seigneurial economy that it fostered, inserted in world capitalist

trade, but based on servile relations of production. Here, I will mention only its implications for the urban-rural dichotomy.

The development of an export economy, fostered by the colonial metropolis, implied further regulation of commercial activity, and thus a war against smuggling. Trade was concentrated in some coastal towns where custom houses were established. In 1861 only six towns, as well as San Juan, had custom houses for both imports and exports. The three more important cities administered 50% of exports and 75% of imports (Vizcarrondo in Ledrú 1863: 69).

A smugglers' trade, scattered along the coast, was replaced by official commerce, centralized basically in the three principal ports. The dying world of marronage was incapable of articulating an opposition. Opposition was expressed only in typically individualistic terms through the social bandit,<sup>9</sup> the pirate, the corsair, not under orders of a foreign country, but supported by his own intrepid courage, and protected against officialdom by the rural *cimarronería*. It is very significant that it was in 1825, when a mercantile official economy was beginning to take form, when the runaway world was moribund in the *estanciero* transition, that Cofresí the Pirate was captured. Cofresí is the social bandit *par excellence* in Puerto Rican history, still remembered as a popular hero. He was the last Caribbean pirate and was captured by U.S. military forces, when the United States was one of the countries most interested in regulating Caribbean trade (Santana 1957; Geigel 1946). The capture of Cofresí represents the last fatal blow to the dying world of marronage, of our first peasantry. The tradition of *cimarrón* independence in a world of growing personal seigneurial dependence, will manifest itself in a deferent distrust of authority that persists to this day.

The trade data of 1861 cited earlier are also illustrative in other ways. San Juan dominated imports, but Mayagüez and Ponce surpassed San Juan in exports. Ponce was the only one of these three cities where exports were more important than imports. While San Juan was representing mainly Spanish officialdom (military and bureaucratic, but with a growing importance of import merchants linked with these),<sup>10</sup> Ponce and Mayagüez developed as cities of the agro-export classes.<sup>11</sup> Since they were cities linked to the agrarian economy, the urban-rural distinction was less evident than in San Juan. In a certain sense, they were centers of an agrarian world and not their antonym.

The heterogeneity and hierarchical structure of the *hacienda* world was reflected in their urban pattern. In Ponce there was great differentiation in dwellings: from seigneurial palaces to shanty towns (Gandía Córdova 1899). Ponce's stratification was even sharper, due to its links to slavery.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the *hacendados* developed a national class ideology that permitted them to justify culturally this existing inequality. The seigneurial

mode of production on which this ideology was based, fostered a paternalistic conception of the fatherland (*patria*) as an all embracing family: a stratified family under the control of the "*padre de agregó*"-the *hacendado*-, but a family nonetheless.

Ponce was, then, the seigneurial city, with roots in the countryside (the *hacienda*) and national hegemonic aspirations: the Island against San Juan, but an Island under the leadership of Ponce, like the leadership the *hacendado* exercised in the rural, all-embracing, family.<sup>13</sup>

It is no coincidence that it was in Ponce in the second half of the nineteenth century that the Puerto Rican *danza* was born. The *danza* is considered by most Puerto Rican musicologists as our first *national* music (Rosado 1946). It is a music that transforms elements of the *cimarrón seis* and the slave plantation *bomba* with new sophistication, turning it into "cultured" music comparable with the best European dancing music of the time. The best innovative composers and musicians, tired of the military or church music of San Juan, moved to Ponce. And in the 1880s, at the same time as the consolidation of the political expression of the *hacendados* was taking place (in the Liberal Reformist Party, later named Autonomist Party) the *danzas* of Juan Morell Campos, its foremost composer, bloomed in Ponce.<sup>14</sup>

It is no coincidence, either, that it was in Ponce that the most important political meetings of the liberal autonomist movement took place, and the newspaper of this movement was published, *La Democracia*, one of the most important newspapers of the day. The seigneurial city of Ponce was the stronghold of a class in historical ascendancy and culturally, economically, politically and socially, the alternative capital of the country.

#### THE RURAL PROLETARIAT OF THE CAPITALIST PLANTATION

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, and in a more decisive and accelerated way during the first decade of the twentieth, the *hacienda* seigneurial economy was transformed into a capitalist economy under the hegemony of the sugar plantation industry. The change of metropolis, with the U.S. invasion of 1898, represented a change from a mercantile colonialism interested in the benefits that accrued from control of trade, to an imperialist colonialism, directed towards direct investment in production. This gave capitalist development a special character.

The early twentieth century plantation was based on wage labor. It broke the pre-capitalist petty mode of production; it transformed the former individual productive activity into a collective one. Work was carried out together: laborers went in groups to cut cane or to plough the land or to fill

the lorries with the cut cane; they left their homes together at the same hour in the mornings and usually returned together; they were paid at the same time and together they queued up for their wages every week. Besides the physical togetherness of their work, the collective nature of the productive activity was also a necessary result of the division of labor at the plantation. The product was not the result of an individual's work, but of the work of persons in interaction. In contrast to the individualistic ideology of the petty producer – of an isolated and family-based vision of life (Marx 1958: 334) – this transformation in productive activity generated a collective *weltanschauung*.

The collective nature of production also generated differences in settlement patterns. In the sugarcane-producing areas the population began to concentrate in the small urban centers of the municipalities, in marked contrast to the other agricultural areas during the first decades of the present century. But more important yet was the settlement pattern developed in the rural areas. On the *haciendas* and the areas of predominantly small-holder farms the general rural settlement pattern was one of dispersion-scattered, isolated homes surrounded by land under cultivation – since production was usually carried out on an individual or family basis. (Dispersion was greater on the *haciendas*, compared to the small-holder areas, due to the larger proportion of land under commercial cultivation). Daily life was, therefore, isolated. Productive relations were mainly family-based, or directly between each individual *agregado* or small producer, and the *hacendado*. Events beyond daily life-celebrations, religious feasts, services, extra-subsistence purchases – were centered around the *hacienda* house or in the urban center of the municipality, the small town (*el pueblo*), where the different social strata were interwoven.

The capitalist plantation generated a totally different rural settlement pattern: clusters of houses in small villages exclusively for plantation workers. (Compare map 1 with map 2, 3 and 4).<sup>15</sup> Scattered housing made no sense when productive activity was collective; day after day the workers had to go to the same field, and work together section by section as the overseer would determine. Payment was per day of work – 12 to 14 hours, including Saturdays.<sup>16</sup> No time was left during the harvest (*zafra*) for cultivation for their own consumption. Moreover, the companies strove for a maximum commercial use of the land; "sugar cane came to cover everything." Isolated or dispersed housing made even less sense if there was no possibility for the worker to cultivate the land surrounding his house. Some companies even built villages for their workers.<sup>17</sup> Within the rural settlement pattern of the plantation area, daily interaction took place among members of the same class. Thus, it did not only break social isolation, but also limited shared life to members of the same social position; it created a situation of social homogeneity.

The capitalist plantation generated a type of 'urban-rural' relationship among its workers that can be called, following Mintz (Mintz 1953) "rural proletarian", where the agrarian world is not what is traditionally considered rural. In the proletarian villages of the plantations and the workers' neighborhoods in sugar cane towns, daily life was semi-urban. The rural world was that of work: cane-cutting hell.

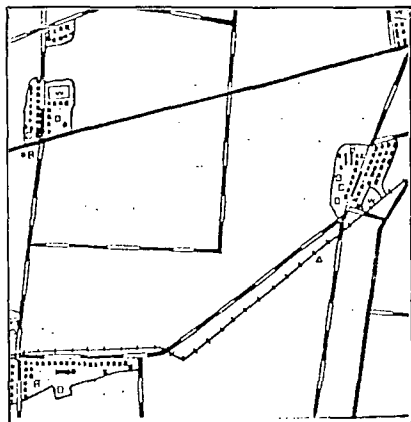
A similar proletarianization process was taking place among urban artisans, with the development of tobacco processing (by 1910 this was the second industry of the country). Proletarianized artisans and plantation proletariats developed common interests and a shared vision. The distinction between manufacturing and agricultural workers was, in a sense, being erased by a common position within the relations of production (wage earners) and by the communal or "urban semi-urban" daily existence. Together they formed (though under the leadership of cigarmakers) the Free Federation of Workers (FLT) and the Socialist Party. The FLT was founded in 1899 but its years of greatest activity and impact in the labor struggle were between 1913 and 1924. The Socialist Party was founded in 1915 as the political arm of the FLT, and the more glorious years of the latter were also those of the greatest growth and power of the Party (García and Quintero 1982).

For these workers, the traditional rural world of the pauperized small-holder peasant or exploited *hacienda* laborer was an impediment to a better society. It was a world that produced strike-breakers, blind followers of the traditional party-bosses, religious fanaticism. The FLT understood that this was so because of ignorance, and the major cause of ignorance was, they thought, social isolation. In meetings, manifestos and even concrete legislative proposals, the FLT and the Socialist Party encouraged the urbanization of the rural world. Community life, solidarity, sharing, was the image of the type of society for which they aimed and which they fought for.

#### THE CITY OF DEPENDENT UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND THE CONTRADICTIONARY FEELINGS TOWARDS THE COUNTRYSIDE

Of course, the pro-urban politics of the labor movement did not imply a defense of actual urban life. In workers' literature of the first decades of the twentieth century, in addition to the critique and denunciation of exploitative urban economic activities, there are numerous references to overcrowding, abusive rents, and bad odors that characterized workers quarters in cities and towns. Yet, the proposed alternative was not the return to an imaginary pastoral *cimarronería*, a possibility that, in any case, the development of *haciendas* had practically eliminated (Picó 1979). There was no alternative but the transformation of the urban ambience itself.

Map 1  
Sugar Cane Area in Guayama



Caña azúcar  
Frutos menores

Casa  
Tienda rural  
Granero  
Cobertizo de equipo  
Grúa para cargar el ferrocarril  
Tanque de riego  
Carretera principal  
Carretera secundaria

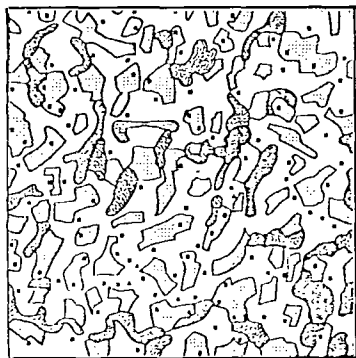
Map 2  
Coffee Area in Maricao



Café  
Pastos  
Frutos menores  
Maleza

Casa  
Granero de café  
Clacil

Map 3  
Minor Crops in Aguada



Frutos menores  
Pastos (rotación de cultivos)  
Café  
Maleza

Casa  
Tienda rural  
Glacil

Map 4  
Tobacco Area in San Lorenzo



Tabaco  
Frutos menores  
Pastos rotación de cultivos  
Maleza

Casa  
Tienda rural  
Ranchón de tabaco



With the capitalist transformation, accelerated by the imperialist take-over, urban power and growth began to concentrate again in San Juan. Compared with the *hacienda* formation, capitalism implied greater integration of the economy, and San Juan, seat of colonial political power, would turn itself also into the center of the economic transformation of the countryside. The new corporations, legally established in San Juan, would centralize in that city the type of decisions formerly taken in the *haciendas*. An illuminating document of the second decade of this century (Porto Rico Mercantile Ass. 1916) shows how the economic importance of the corporations had rapidly surpassed that of the individual or family firm, and how most of the larger corporations, those with a capital of more than \$50,000, had their main offices in San Juan (29 in total and only 4 in the second city of Ponce).

Port activity began to concentrate also in San Juan. By 1920, 36.8% of the total trade tonnage of the Island went through San Juan and less than half (16.4%) through Ponce (Porto Rico 1921: 381-390).

The concentration of both economic and political power in the capital city, turned San Juan into the main attraction point for those interested in finding a place in the power structure or striving to develop the basis of some new hegemony; for example, the newspaper *La Democracia*, mentioned before, founded in Ponce in 1890, moved to San Juan in 1904. The 1935 Puerto Rico's *Who's Who* (Asenjo 1934) is very illustrative in this respect. It includes information on 434 persons; of these, 67 had been born in San Juan, but 281 were living there. On the other hand, 28 had been born in Ponce and only 26 were living in this second city.

After Ponce's spectacular growth in the nineteenth century, the capitalist transformation of the early twentieth century left this seigniorial city with little importance, and urban life began to be identified with San Juan, the traditional opposite pole to the "Island's" cultural values.

Capitalist transformation nurtured the emergence of a proletariat, with its anti-rural stance and pro-urbanization politics described in the previous section of this essay. But it also engendered the seeds of its organizational disintegration. During the first decade of the century, employment in the main industries of capitalist development, sugar cane and tobacco-processing, grew enormously, concomitant with the extension of proletarianization. But by the second decade these industries had found ways of increasing production without an increase in labor. From 1910 to 1934 sugar production increased more than three times, from 347,000 tons to 1,114,000, while total agricultural employment in the industry increased only from 87,643 workers to 92,398. This means that while in 1910 25.3 agricultural laborers were needed to produce 100 tons of sugar, in 1934 only 8.3 were used.

There are no reliable figures for tobacco-processing in the early 1930s, but between 1910 and 1920 the same process was evident: a 12 percent increase in production with a 26 percent reduction in employment.

Declining employment in sugar-cane and tobacco-manufacturing brought the proletarianization process to a standstill. It was precisely the transformation in these industries that had provided a material base for the formation of a Puerto Rican proletariat at the beginning of the century, and cigar makers and sugar-cane workers had been the most important sectors in its organizations. The Puerto Rican working class, formed in the initial stage of capitalist development of these industries – when employment was on the increase – was born believing that proletarianization would cover the entire country. As the life patterns of the seigneurial world began to disintegrate, workers, through labor education and trade union action, would take off the blinkers of deference (and religion) which held them back from the ideological struggle; the victory of socialism, the 1919 programme of the Socialist party suggested, was certain and inevitable. (Partido Socialista, 1919).

From the mid-1920s, however, the working class faced a situation in which, even though the seigneurial world continued to disintegrate, the proletariat no longer grew. *Hacienda* laborers were transformed not in proletarians but in marginal poor. There was a tremendous growth of unemployment, of underemployment in the service sector, of individual petty trading and *chiripeo* (unstable and sporadic jobs) mainly, as is common in these situations, in the principal city, whose economic activity created expectations of finding some job. In 1899 the cities of Ponce and San Juan had almost the same size in terms of population, each representing around 3.4% of the total population of the country. By 1930 the population of San Juan was four times what it had been in 1899 and twice the size of Ponce, representing more than 8% of the country's total. In 1960 it represented 18.3% and Ponce only 4.8%. A basic factor in this growth was the proliferation of shanty towns in San Juan. (Stevens 1985 and Safa 1974).

This process weakened the labor movement in various ways. The *marginados* were very difficult to organize in the trade union structure of the FLT. Besides, the increase in the industrial reserve army represented a threat to the trade union struggle. There is evidence of stagnation in gross wages in the 1920s and '30s and of a proportional reduction in the value of labor in the productive sector. There is also evidence that many strikes ended in failure during this period. But most important of all, the paralysis in the proletarianization process and the growth of *marginados* shattered the faith of the working-class in the certainty of its future victory.

The pro-urbanization politics of working-class organizations collapsed

with working-class struggles themselves, and with the distressing realities of urban marginality. The migrations to New York City in the late 1940s and in the 50s deepened this collapse.

Puerto Ricans turned into urban people while rejecting both rural plantation hell and new urban marginality. With the long historical marronage tradition, this situation has nurtured the contradictory feelings towards the urban-rural dichotomy so vividly portrayed in the songs with which this essay began.

#### NOTES

1. "I will sing a song to country-life, being a peasant is a national pride, to see the cattle grow in the hills and to feel some wild plants pick me."
2. ...the "zum zum" of the mosquitos and the "pío pío" of the chickens leave me with no rest."
3. This is not an original situation nor an original concern. One of the most profound analysts of British culture, stated recently:  
 "For it is a critical fact that in and through these transforming experiences [urban industrialization] English attitudes to the country, and to ideas of rural life, persisted with extraordinary power, so that even after the society was predominantly urban its literature, for a generation, was still predominantly rural; and even in the twentieth century, in an urban and industrial land, forms of the older ideas and experiences still remarkably persist" (Williams 1975: 10-11).
4. Very correctly the Velázquez Spanish-English Dictionary defines *cimarrón* as wild and unruly besides maroon and runaway. (Chicago Pollet Pub. Co., 1964: p. 162).
5. Novelist Possé (1983) through fiction gives an extraordinary picture of this climate. Historian Puigross (1965: 102) analyses the predominance of Castille, and hence of seigneurialism, in Spanish colonization but adds "la estricta prohibición a judíos, moros y conversos de viajar a las Indias occidentales y radicarse en ellos, *lo que no evitó que muchos de estos últimos lo hicieran clandestinamente*". (my emphasis).
6. See also the vivid description of Morales Muñoz (1944: 12).
7. I use tawny-moor as a translation of "pardo", referring to dark skinned persons with white or white-like physiognomy. In Puerto Rico the tawny-moors were varied intermixtures of indian, arab, black and white ancestries.
8. This analysis is based on the information on founding date included in the 1867 Census (*La Gaceta*, 17/9/68). From 1850 to 1980 only sixteen towns were founded and two of the previous lost their town status and became areas of San Juan.
9. Hobsbawm (1959 and 1969) analyses how the social bandits emerge mainly in peasant economies threatened by commercialization or mercantile development.

10. On this alliance see Quiñones (1888 and 1889). I presented a preliminary analysis in Quintero (1977).
11. Lee (1963: 11, 67, 68) has excellent descriptions contrasting Ponce and San Juan: Ponce as modern, liberal, cosmopolitan, free-thinking and San Juan as Spanish, conservative, Catholic.
12. Ponce was probably the municipality that had the greatest development of the slave economy in the country. See Scarano (1981, 1984) and Curet (1979).
13. It is analogous to Bloch's reference to the feudal lord in medieval France as "le premier habitant" (Bloch 1941).
14. Veray (1977) explicitly identifies this political movement with the *danza*, and the latter with national identity. The foremost leader of this political movement, Luis Muñoz Rivera, referred to Ponce as "the most Puerto Rican of Puerto Rican cities." See also Quintero Rivera (1986).
15. These maps are taken from Northwestern University, (1952: 247, 251-253). Each represents one square mile. See also Jones and Picó (1955).
16. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives 1913: 2, (reproduced in Quintero 1976). Twenty-two years later – in 1935 – after a continuous struggle by working class organizations and even after legislation for eight hours of work a day, the working day in the sugar industry fluctuated between 8.8 and 13.9 hours (Gayer 1939: table 71).
17. Description and photographs in Mintz 1960; Steward 1956: ch. 9; Clark et al, 1930: 18. Data regarding its quantitative scope in Gayer 1939: table 100.

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## BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AND POPULAR MUSIC IN JAMAICA IN THE 1960s AND 1970s

### INTRODUCTION

Some years ago, I used to help with the training of social workers at the University of the West Indies. I felt then that some of the assumptions on which we based the training were faulty. I felt, for instance, that clients come to social workers and the agency because the problem-solving strategy they have been using has broken down. What they require from the therapist at this point is help in removing the blocks and reconstructing their problem-solving device. Our training seemed to assume that clients come to us naked and that we were to show them the "right way." This approach to therapy is time-consuming and potentially confusing. I felt that if we knew the kinds of strategies our clients use to solve their problems, we could meet them half-way and reduce the therapeutic time as well as the psychic pain. So I went into the field in 1975 to look at the kinds of strategies Jamaicans have traditionally used.

I interviewed ninety persons over the age of 70, (Brodber 1980) all but two of whom were black-skinned.<sup>1</sup> The intention of the interview was to get the respondent to define freely what was the problem and what was the solution as it occurred in their lives. The question I asked all, in one guise or another, was "What is the earliest thing you can remember?" and with guidance, they took it from there.

What struck me forcibly was the desire to talk about a past of Africa, slavery, Marcus Garvey, but even more the strength of the sentiment which accompanied this desire. One informant, more than 80 years old and whom I call "Bambi," (Brodber 1980, tape 60 StjFa) told me the story of her grandfather's near hanging in the disturbances of the 1830s in western



Jamaica. (See Reckord 1969, and Brathwaite 1982 for orthodox accounts of this rebellion). He had lived to tell her his story and she felt that I had been especially sent to record it. Bambi, over 80, commented:

If me even come and see dem a do a white man anything, me na talk. No man. I don't business wid it. Me have anything wid whiteman! I couldn't business wid it. The ole ginneration pay for it. Lawd.....dem meet it. Dem meet it... (Brodber 1980: 10)

I found pathetic that with a national motto of 'Out of many, one people,' nothing had been done in Jamaica to address the sense of ancestral hurt that Bambi felt.

Another respondent, after discussing slavery, commented "the ole people nuh like how dem dish out August" (Brodber 1980: 15). He was referring to the fact that Emancipation Day, formerly the first day of August and parochially called 'August,' no longer exists and we have instead a holiday on the first Monday of August to celebrate Independence. This man felt that there had been a conspiracy by the establishment to down-play his history. And there is some truth to this (see Higman 1979).

Part of this celebration, as my informants give it, was the singing of songs which had obviously been composed by freedmen and handed down. One such is:

First of August morning  
March round the booth  
Then you see how we  
get in freedom now  
Jubilee aa come. (Brodber 1980: 8)

While I was empathizing with the generation born about 1900 and which I call the second generation of freedmen, the sound of Burning Spear, (see *Swing* 1975) a group of young men under thirty years of age, was singing through the amplifiers of the record shops in tones similar to Bambi's: "Do you remember the days of slavery? Do you remember the days of slavery?" It was as if a river of sentiment that had been running underground for decades had suddenly surfaced. I and my kind of Afro-Jamaicans knew only the silence of that sentimental river. Nowhere in elementary school, in high school or in university had I and my age mates in the scribal tradition seen or heard that river.<sup>1</sup> We were glad to hear this new sound. It relaxed us. We took off our jackets and ties and made ourselves comfortable in shirt jacks. And we understood at a personal level that for us black Jamaicans, there were two orientations: a mulatto orientation and an Afro-orientation, the latter having been submerged in our consciousness. The persistent reggae beat and the lyrics it carried were partly responsible for awakening this consciousness.

One way to document the connection between this music and an awakening of consciousness is to point out that among those of the scribal, the mulatto tradition, the middle class, the Afro-centric reggae tunes were increasingly being bought in preference to American records. This phenomenon – the penetration of the mulatto orientation by the Afro-orientation through the medium of the song – is what I want to examine. I want to look first of all at the career of the two orientations, then to look at the ‘Africanization’ of the song and the process by which it became a penetrative tool.

#### THE TWO ORIENTATIONS

Traditionally, the Afro-Jamaican middle class has emphasized its European family connections<sup>2</sup> and where there are none, its grasp of European culture. This has been much less so among the underclass so that within the black population – 90 percent of the total Jamaican population – there are two predominant orientations: an Afro-orientation and a mulatto orientation. The history of Jamaican society is a tale of European efforts to keep plantations viable and, therefore, black labor cooperative if not quiescent. One technique used to achieve this was education, and the kind which emphasized literary skills.<sup>3</sup> It is this education which produced and so successfully maintained the distinctions which I have called orientations. The unlettered lower class, depending on the oral tradition for its information, was kept in touch with its past of Africa and slavery and with its African identity. The other was exposed to English textbooks, curricula and examinations, and given certificates to jobs based on an understanding of European ways.

The literate Afro-Jamaicans who sought positions in places controlled by the plantations, tended to see this book learning not simply as a tool for making a livelihood but as the ultimate truth; and just as the reading materials portrayed their bodies and the lives lived around them as at best unmentionable, so they saw themselves.<sup>4</sup> This orientation is typified in the correspondence of Rev. Geddes, an Afro-Jamaican of the Methodist Church who in 1922 was acting Chairman of the Methodist District in Jamaica. Rev. R.M. Parnter, another Afro-Jamaican clergyman serving in Jamaica, had recently died. A eulogy appeared in the *Methodist Recorder*, the organ of the church worldwide. It referred to him as a “highly honoured negro.” Some Jamaicans, including Rev. Geddes, were annoyed by the epithet. He submitted one Jamaican’s response to this reference with his own endorsement to the Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society:

The enclosed was sent to me soon after the Recorder with the reference to the late Rev. R. M. Parnter reached the island. I am sending it to you because it really expresses the indignant feeling that the Notice has stirred among our very best people. If the Mission House perpetuates these blunders too often, there will be an alienation that we can hardly afford. People of coloured race in the island are never called negroes. Indeed, a black man, educated, gentlemanly, and successful is never referred to as a negro, except by the Apostles of Garveyism. I commend to you the suggestion in the enclosed that reference to us should be "West Indian", "Jamaican", "Barbadian" etc. (*Methodist Missionary Record* -Jamaica, Geddes to Burnett, 16-1-1922, Encl.)

There were, however, some Afro-Jamaicans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who defined themselves in terms of race and grouped themselves accordingly. Some of these early professional and lettered people were Dr. J. Robert Love (see Lewis 1977: 56) and Dr. J. Albert Thorne,<sup>5</sup> who admittedly were Afro-Bahamian and Afro-Barbadian respectively. But there was also Alexander Dixon,<sup>6</sup> who in 1901 got enough support from propertied blacks<sup>7</sup> to be the first "full-blooded negro" (Anonymous 1930) to be elected to the Legislative Council. This kind of consciousness on the part of the middle class, the literate, appears to have been short lived. Alexander Bedward<sup>8</sup> succeeded in mobilizing a great part of the black underclass into a religion which conceived of black people as possible angels in the heavenly hierarchy. He was followed in the 1920s by Marcus Garvey, who enjoyed great popularity among Jamaican peasants who left all parts of the rural areas to stare at a ship manned by black people (Brodber 1980: 19). Nevertheless, Garvey could not get enough support from propertied blacks to get a seat in the Legislative Council.<sup>9</sup> In fact, his emphasis on color and Africa got little open support from them: they saw themselves and wanted to be seen in terms of the place where they were born rather than in terms of their ancestral history.

This orientation continued into the late 1930s. At a time when Britain was terrified of the force of black unity<sup>10</sup> and could possibly have been brought to make more concessions if faced with its actuality, the lettered middle-class politicians who took over the mass movement of 1938, chose to define themselves and their followers in terms of country of birth and in terms of occupation and eschewed race – a common African ancestry – as a bonding agent.<sup>11</sup> How is it then that in the late 1960s and the 1970s we find politicians advertising themselves as "young, gifted and black,"<sup>12</sup> that we see middle-class Afro-Jamaicans giving their children African names, that we find them wanting to know more about Africa-inspired cloths and hairstyles and find them wanting to know more about Africa – a first in the known history of Afro-Jamaica.

Like any other trading post, plantation Jamaica was sensitive to the

changes in values in the metropolitan centers. In more recent times, Jamaican culture has been similarly sensitive. Changes in the Euro-American attitude towards blacks laid the foundation for change in middle-class thinking in the 1950s and 1960s. About this time, the world began to accept Africans and their way of life. It began to admit that they could govern large populations and that their national dress was a good enough garb in which to address world fora. And it gave its attention and approval to the struggle of U.S. blacks for civil rights. This new attitude towards things African and black set the scene for the recognition and acceptance among the middle class of an Afro-centricity which long existed in Jamaica and remained unbroken in the oral tradition stretching from Love and Bedward to Garvey and to the Rastafarians, who had maintained a presence *sotto voce* from the 1930s to the early 1960s (See also Nettleford 1970).

At home there were university-sponsored talks on "identity"; a study and a serialized report on Rastafarians (Smith, Augier and Nettleford 1960); a lawyer defining himself as black and inviting others into a political party on this basis;<sup>13</sup> visits from African heads of state (see Nettleford 1970) and Miriam Makeba, black South African singer presenting her beauty and talent in its racial and cultural characteristics.<sup>14</sup> 'Black' and 'Negro' were no longer necessarily pejorative terms for the middle class. But it was the pop-singer, the loudest voice in the oral tradition who, now armed with the appropriate technology, continually reinforced in the 1960s and 1970s a black aesthetic allied to a black-centered religion.

#### RACE, CLASS, POLITICS AND SONG

After the 1938 riots, the British Cabinet admitted to itself that the "social and economic condition of the coloured population" in the West Indies was bad and should have been attended to fifty years before. This finding was no news to some Afro-Jamaican songwriters and singers now anonymous. They had been lamenting this condition for a long time. I remember hearing my mother sing in the 1940s and 1950s what seems to be an American import:

Coon, coon, coon,  
From morning until noon  
Coon, coon, coon  
I wish I had a different shade.

They had been pondering in song what to do about their condition. I heard in the late 1950s when black Jamaicans were migrating to England in droves:

Come on now everybody  
 And hear what I have to say  
 Listen and I will tell you  
 The talk of the town today  
 In every street and every corner  
 That you may walk  
 You will see a group  
 Of people park  
 They're not skylarking  
 They're only talking  
 About Ethiopia

And the beautiful lines indicating lack of interest in the wrangling of political theorists of the scribal, mulatto orientation:

You can tek way  
 Mi land and mi dumb thing<sup>15</sup>  
 I don't care a kick about that  
 But take me back to Ethiopia.  
 Let me mark out mi burial spot  
 For if I die before that day  
 My duppy will be going to stay  
 For in my sickness,  
 I have a weakness  
 For Ethiopia.<sup>16</sup>

Migration to Africa was obviously one answer. H.I.M. Haile Selassie, the manifestation of God on earth according to Rastafarian theosophy, would guide them home. I heard also in the 1950s the Rastafarian chant:

We're going to leave this Babylon world [Jamaica]  
 King Rasta lead us home  
 Glory to God in Zion  
 We are going home  
 To Ethiopia, we are going home.

None of these lyrics, enchanting though the tunes were which carried them, were bought by the middle class in great number for dancing or for listening. Radio was just coming into its own,<sup>17</sup> and the local record producing industry was just being born.<sup>18</sup> As is usual in the oral tradition, one had to be physically close to the source to hear a Rastafarian chant; be close enough to the traffic in the weekend markets to get a 'track' and hear the lyrics on it sung.<sup>19</sup> But by the late 1950s middle-class Jamaicans were moving away from the 'yards' and their contact with the market people and their proximity to Rastafarian camps. Their reach for education had always taken them out of

the culturally mixed rural area and into Kingston where most of the secondary schools were, and the jobs for which their certificates fitted them. Now, middle income housing schemes were taking them out of the culturally mixed yards (Brodber 1975) and into mulatto ghettos. Interpenetration of orientations was becoming difficult.

There is one level at which contact between the Afro-orientation and the mulatto orientation has always been maintained – the political arena. Certainly as early as 1901, the middle stratum had used the threat of mobilized crowds of unlettered people as a weapon in their constitutional struggle with the British Crown.<sup>20</sup> Universal adult suffrage which came in 1944, made it imperative for the politicians in the mulatto orientation to devise ways of influencing their unlettered brothers into voting for them. A technique used by both political parties certainly from the late 1940s was the replication of the Afro-religious meeting on their political platforms. Hymns, for instance, were sung with the name of the candidate replacing that of the deity. This traditional manipulation of the Afro-culture popularized its style – its music in particular – and in time broadcast the message of the singer which by the late 1960s and the 1970s was consonant with that filtering in from the rest of the black world – black power.

#### THE POP-SINGER AND HIS SONG

There have been in Jamaica three kinds of singing, each relating to a different kind of musical occasion. There is the ballad, the lyrics of which are inherited, and often have lost their meaning. Tunes and words in this case are community property and the singer is merely the mouthpiece for the group. Then there are the love songs and the hymns in which the singer is individualized and his stance is a soliloquy. Both these latter styles are reinforced by the formal education system. European love songs were taught in singing classes, and though the references in the lyrics were hardly likely to be understood,<sup>21</sup> the sentiment was effectively carried through the musical arrangement. Odes to the Christian God were similarly taught and were reinforced by the church after school and throughout adult life. These were then lyrically and instrumentally familiar models and were accessible to anyone who wanted to express his own feelings through music.

There had also been special places for performing traditional music. The work gang and – later – community meetings for the folk songs; the church for religious music; and the stage, night club, dance hall and dance yards for the love songs. The night club was patronized by those of the mulatto orientation while the dance halls and yards were the province of the Afro-culture.

The gramophone and the record players, latter day adjuncts of oral transmission, have been with us for a long time, too, but like the radio station which came in the 1940s, the presentations they offered tended to be American and the listenership restricted to the mulatto culture, i.e. those who could afford to buy them. It was not until the 1950s when the mento and calypso bands were drawn by the tourist trade to the North Coast and the 'sound system' introduced by contract laborers to the U.S.<sup>22</sup> began to spread through the rest of Jamaica, that the voice of the Afro-cultured singer began to be widely transmitted.

Jamaican pop singers were recorded first as imitators of American singers and songs and later as singers of their own compositions, first for dancing in the sessions controlled by the 'sound system' owners and then as music to be sold on record for general dancing at house parties and for listening. Much of the early compositions which began to be heard in the 1960s dealt with morals and with love; some, such as Eric Morris' popular hit of 1964 *Sammy Dead*,<sup>23</sup> being re-issues of folk songs. Here there is no apparent effort to change the lyrics so that they carry an additional meaning. The singer sang as generations before him had:

Sammy plant piece of  
corn dung a gully  
An it bear til it kill  
Poor Sammy  
Sammy Dead, Sammy Dead  
Sammy Dead oh.

The tune, however, had been jazzed up from the traditional slow mento beat to a ska beat – a new and Jamaican dance style.

But the record-buying, night club attending, house-party-going middle-class did not like these songs as much as they did the foreign ones. In 1963, the most popularly bought songs according to the national broadcasting station's list of popular hits were, *Whatcha gonna do about it* by Doris Troy, *Empty Chair* by Keith Lynn, *Still* by Bill Anderson, *You're the reason I'm a man* by Sparrow, *Mockingbird* by Inez and Charles Fox, *Come Softly* by Jimmy James and *The End of the World* by Skeeter Davis. Jimmy James and Keith Lynn were the only Jamaicans to make this list. Their songs, like those of the foreigners, with the exception of Sparrow's *Dan is the Man*, were secular love songs.

It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that Jamaicans began to choose local tunes as much as and, later, more than foreign ones. In 1968, there was an increase in the number of locals on the top ten. The Maytals, Judy Mowatt, Joe Higgs, Andy Capp, the Gaylads, Laurel Aiken and King

Stitt were becoming household names. Romantic love was still the theme of most of the lyrics but not as strongly as in 1963. Andy Capp's *Pop a top* and King Stitt's *Lee Van Cleef*, for instance, had nothing to do with love. In 1973, five years later, the foreigners were still being popularly bought. Al Greene, Jerome Jackson, Smokey Robinson, Roberta Flack, Marvin Gaye and Johnny Nash were still with us but the locals dominated. Romance was still in evidence in the local tunes as in the foreign, but in the former, a wider range of circumstances was now being celebrated by the lyricists and bought by the record-playing public. There were songs about the new dance craze but there were also an increasing number dealing with the singer's personal response to his environment.

One factor which encouraged this latter trend was the politicians' traditional strategy of using the trappings of the Afro-culture to court the masses. Justin Hinds and his *Carry go bring come* is an early case of this exploitation leading to popularisation. This tune, done in 1964 and accompanied by the then popular ska beat, in the moralising vein of some of the folk songs, describes the hero's quarrel with a woman whom he characterises as Jezebel, Western literature's most evil woman. Our hero will, of course, triumph over her in time because it is written "the meek shall inherit the earth." The lyricist and the song go on to universalise the quarrel – "How long shall the wicked reign over my people." This feature made the song an apt vehicle for making innuendos and it was used as such, being background music at the street meetings of the opposition party during the election campaign of 1966–67. This exposure, naturally, made it very popular and brought into the political and public arena the emotions, problems and style of expression of the country's urban youth.

#### POLITICIZATION OF THE SONG

This kind of transfer and the ensuing popularity of this tune must have done much to convince young singers that there need be no taboo on the public expression of their personal feelings through music. Put cynically, a market existed for their personal thoughts and their comments on their environment. Moreover, their anti-establishment position would find welcome ears among an opposition waiting to be re-elected and happy to see and use signs of disaffection among potential voters. The Wailers' *Rude boy ska* was one of the top tunes of 1966 and Desmond Dekker's *007* was there in 1967. The Maytal's *That's my number* made it in 1968 and in 1969 everyone danced to the Ethiopians' *Everything Crash*. The Wailers and Dekker described the alienated youth of depressed Kingston – a group of which they were a part –



and their constant battle with the establishment in the form of the police. The Maytals described their experience in jail while the Ethiopians pointed to the disintegration of the establishment itself. In the 1970's, Bob Marley and the Wailers in *Duppy Conqueror* described their confrontation with the law and their feeling on being released from jail, but with a difference. This time the record-buying public were told that the singer had found spiritual strength through the "powers of the most high Jah" and had become a "duppy conqueror" able to defeat his foe, the establishment. The songwriters were now not only describing the conditions of depressed blacks but offering solutions: enlist the help of your God in your struggle with the temporal powers, they counselled.

The singers' sense of themselves as important spokesmen had led many of them into meditation on the nature of their identity and their purpose in life.<sup>24</sup> These meditations had led some to seek a deeper understanding of the subjects of which they spoke – God, the Bible, the black experience and the future of their race. The result was an attraction and, often, a conversion to Rastafarian philosophy. This world view began to affect the lyrics, thus the reference to "Jah", one of the names by which Rastafarians call their God, in Bob Marley's *Duppy Conqueror* above. By 1971, a song whose lyrics explicitly canvass its listeners towards an acceptance of the Rastafarian concept of black history was among the top ten.<sup>25</sup> The singer, now political analyst, activist and priest, sings:

Bring back Maccabee version  
that God gave to black man  
Give back King James version  
Black man get up stand up on you foot  
And give black God the glory.

And he accounts for the anguish of blacks:

You [white man] stole the land God gave I  
And taught I to be covetous  
What other wickedness  
Have you got in mind?

The singer now identifies himself not just as an angry youth, colloquially called a 'rude boy', hounded by the establishment, or as a balladeer, pointing to a group of people determined to return to Africa. He was now one of this group – a black man with a distinct culture with its own traditions, heroes, God and an explanation for the lower class status of most of his race and color.

In the 1972 elections, this black consciousness was taken by the politicians into the political arena. Delroy Wilson's hit tune *Better must come*, the lament of a young man who feels that he is unfairly oppressed, who examines his life, sees that it is righteous and accordingly feels that "better must come," blasted from the microphones of the opposition candidates. This singer, like the one turned 'Duppy Conqueror', invokes the power of Jah. Many who went to these political meetings or who attended dances could hear the invocation constantly. The theosophy advanced by the singers was further catapulted into the mainstream when the opposition leader publicly displayed a rod which he had been given on his tour of Africa by H.I.M. Haile Selassie. His opponents claim that he had lost it and they now had it and the ensuing political farce got media coverage. Those who had no access to ghetto singers and, therefore, to the world view they advanced, could learn about it from the debate between the two major electioneering parties. The connotations associated with the rod were made very clear in Junior Byles' very popular reggae hit of the same year, *Beat Down Babylon*:

I and I a go beat down Babylon  
 I and I a go whip them wicked men  
 I and I a go beat them, whip them  
 For I and I's a righteous Rasta man.

The sense of self as a black man, a Rastafarian, a man with a home in Africa, a man with a particular lifestyle and as one charged to guide others, continued to be aired and was unequivocally stated in Bob Marley's confessional "Natty Dread" of 1974:

Dread Natty Dread now,  
 Dreadlocks Congo Bongo I.<sup>26</sup>  
 Natty dreadlocks cena Babylon  
 A dreadlock Congo Bongo I.  
 Children get your culture  
 And don't stay here and jester  
 Or the battle will be hotter  
 And you won't get no supper.  
 .....  
 .....  
 O Natty, Natty,  
 Natty 21,000 miles away from home  
 O Natty, Natty  
 And that's a long way  
 For Natty to be from home.

Bob Marley's utterances in this vein continued throughout the 1970s and

continued to be carried by rhythms attractive enough to take them into all walks of Jamaican life.

Other well-known singers joined him in stance, philosophy and purpose and on the nation's top ten. By the mid and late 1970s, the language and the references used by the now decidedly Afro-cultured singers had been so clarified that they became part of the lexicon<sup>27</sup> and their message, therefore, continually more widely understood and the words on wax, more widely bought. Their speech, their dress, their ideas moved with their songs into the record-buying middle class to help to produce a cross-class cultural form which economist George Beckford identified in 1977 as the "Culture of Dread."

The culture of Dread represents a challenge to both racism and the class oppression of capitalism. That culture is the most positive and dynamic factor within the Jamaican body politic and body social at this time. Precisely because it provides a hope for revolutionary change, the culture of dread is embraced by many among the working class, middle class youth and some professionals. Manners of dress and speech and a virtual revolution in the natural culture through music (art and sculpture to a lesser degree) are but some of the manifestations of the culture of dread (Beckford 1977).

Culture's<sup>28</sup> song below – words as well as music – epitomises the confidence in his role of prophet, social commentator, black activist and prime creator of the Culture of Dread, which the singer had by the beginning of the new decade:

Too long in our little ghetto  
 Wrongs been going on  
 Let's protest  
 Children of Israel  
 Who really love rights  
 For Jah set I and I as a watchman  
 Around Babylonian walls  
 O children of Israel  
 I and I should never hold I peace  
 While wrong is going on  
 Day or night  
 Man bust down Babylon Gate  
 Ah say prepare ye the way  
 For Jah people.

Bob Marley's award of the Order of Merit, one of the nation's highest honours, was evidence that the mulatto orientation had been pierced. People of this class were beginning to empathize with the impassioned cry of the old people whose involvement with the oral tradition had made them feel "Dem

meet it... the old generation pay for it" or "Lawd nega [the Negro] tough you know. Black people tough" (Brodber 1980 tapes 60 StjFa, 71 StMMc). His voice at the beginning of the new decade was a clear echo of their sentiments:

Old pirates yes they rob I  
Sold I to the merchant ships  
Minutes after they took I  
From the bottomless pit  
But my hand was made strong  
By the hand of the Almighty  
We forward in this generation  
Triumphantly. (transcr. Boot and Goldman 1981)

The Afro-orientation and the oral tradition had found a loud voice in the singers with their microphones, electric guitars, catchy tunes and discs. But was this confluence of sentiment across class lines and generational lines, this culture of Dread, this sense of self as a part of the Afro-Jamaican experience just a surge from below that would double back to its subterranean caves? And was this perceived racism, which is obviously a traditional problem, to be put back under a bushel?

## NOTES

1. It was not until the 1960s that West Indian history was taught in the high schools. Teaching, of course, requires texts. Most of these were not published until 1960 (e.g. Parry, John H. and Sherlock, P.M., *A short history of the West Indies*. (London: McMillan 1960); Augier, F.R., Gordon, S.C., Hall, D.G. and Reckord, M., *The making of the West Indies*. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1960); Augier, F.R. and Gordon, Shirley, C., *Sources of West Indian history*. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1962).
2. This tendency is so remarkable that R.T. Smith (1982), following Jack Alexander, calls it the "myth of the origin of the Jamaican middle class."
3. This function of education was explicitly stated in 1835 in the Sterling Report on the need for the education of the ex-slaves (see Gordon 1963: 20-1), and was restated at the beginning of the present century by J.R. Williams, superintendent of education in Jamaica (see Hurwits 1971: 162).
4. Book IV of the *Royal reader*, by Nelson and Co., 1886, the series used in primary schools in the early twentieth century is the only one of the series which dealt with black people. It emphasised their 'peculiar' physical features - "the Negro has black skin and woolly hair." It implied that they were lazy and silly.
5. See for official comment on Thorne's politics and his petition to the Crown for lands in the

Congo for the settlement of West Indian and American Negroes: CO 137/731 dispatch 197 Probyn to Viscount Milner. Encl. 14/2/12919.

6. For reference to Dixon, see CO 137/610 Conf 22/3/1900 Hemmings to Chamberlain. Encl. Report from G.E. Maunsell.

7. There were franchise qualifications – 10/-per annum tax or 40 pounds per annum income.

8. Alexander Bedward was a politico-religious leader whose ministry in Jamaica lasted from 1895–1920 (see Elkin 1977).

9. Associations of the late 1920s and the 1930s such as the Jamaica League, the Jamaica Reform Club and the Jamaica National League, which emphasized change within Jamaica, were some of these groups to which middle-class blacks subscribed (see Carnegie 1973).

10. This impression comes through the governors' dispatches of the day. In CO 137/827/688868 Cabinet SECRET – "Proposed Royal Commission" memo to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. For instance, race consciousness inspired by ill-treatment of the "coloured" race is accepted as the underlying cause of the 1938 disturbances. The Cabinet suggests that certain social and economic reforms be quickly instituted to forestall further manifestations of racial discontent.

11. The founders of the two major political parties championed nationalism (Manley) and labor (Bustamante). The latter, for instance, felt that celebrations of Independence should be associated with the successful labor movement of the 1930s rather than with memories of slavery (see Higman 1979: 70).

12. This is the title of a song made popular by black America's Nina Simone in the 1970s. It was later re-worked by Jamaica's Prince Buster. Both versions made the 'top ten' of the Jamaica Broadcasting Association's popular hits but the local version was more popular. The title became the logo of the campaign in 1971–72 of P.J. Patterson who won the election and became a minister of government. Patterson is black-skinned and a lawyer.

13. Millard Johnson, a lawyer who had worked in Africa, launched the People's Progressive Party and campaigned in 1961–62. The party's program was radical.

14. Miriam Makeba visited Jamaica in 1966. She wore her hair unstraightened and close-cropped and wore her national dress.

15. The detractors of the People's National Party, one of the two major political parties, labelled it communist and said that it would nationalize all property including the "land and dumb thing" of the peasants.

16. I think this song was done by Laurel Aitken.

17. The first radio station, ZQI started broadcasting in September of 1939. It was on the air for only two hours per day.

18. The first recordings are said to have been pressed in 1960 (see Clarke 1980: 58).

19. The usual method of disseminating popular songs prior to the era of the disc, was to sell copies of the lyrics written on sheets of paper. The singer apparently sung the songs to his clients.
20. The commission of inquiry concluded that the second of the two riots had been planned (CO 137/627 Dispatch 304 Hemmings to Chamberlain 27/5/1901, Encl. Report on the riots in Montego Bay). Herbert Thomas (1927), one of the officers handling the investigation, states that it was planned by the gentry angry at proposed increases in taxes.
21. Even songs written in the British dialects were taught. Take, for instance, *Maxwelton's braes are bonnie* (Wm. Douglas/Lady Scot).
22. Sebastian Clarke (1980) attributes the introduction of the 'sound system' to the Jamaican music scene, to Clement Dodd aka Coxson aka Downbeat, who went to the U.S. several times as a canecutter and was introduced to it there. "Sound systems" allow for loud amplification of recorded music for popular dances.
23. The Jamaica Broadcasting Association, the government-owned station, came on the air in 1959. One of its features was the *Top Ten* tunes – those records most frequently bought and requested in special radio programs. Their records concerning this program are the data base for the discussion of popular tunes. The records of the *Swing* magazine (Kingston), are also used for the period 1971–78. I did all but one of the transcripts of these songs, there being no published collection of popular lyrics available at the time of writing this paper.
24. In Brodber and Greene (1981) we note that the singers began to see themselves as the "singers and players" ordained to enter the Theocratic Kingdom referred to in Psalm 68 vs 25.
25. It appears that the original done by Max Romeo was not the one which got airplay but a 'version' (without words) done by a group called the Brethren. Max Romeo's version was nevertheless popular.
26. "Dread" and "Dreadlocks" are terms to describe hair worn long and matted. "Natty" refers to matted hair not yet long enough to hang. "Congo" and "Bongo" are, of course, references to Africa and Africans. The singer is therefore saying "I am of African heritage and my hair is consequently of a particular kind. I am proud of these things."
27. Velma Pollard (1980) points out the extent to which words coined by Rastafarians have seeped into everyday usage.
28. This is obviously a stage name. I have not been able to find the real name.

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## BLACK IMAGES IN DOMINICAN LITERATURE

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On December 5, 1492, on his first voyage to America, Christopher Columbus arrived on the shores of Hispaniola. The island, so named by the Admiral himself, was populated by Taíno Indians, who were soon enslaved and put to work in search for gold (see Moya Pons 1978). The hard work of mining; the general abuse of their labor; the murders perpetrated by the Spaniards; the massive suicides committed by the Taíno themselves as an act of rejection of colonial domination; as well as the impact of European diseases, soon decimated the indigenous population.

The efforts of the Dominican friars to defend the natives, and the legal measures enacted by the Spanish Crown in 1512 and 1513 to regulate the *encomiendas*, were of no avail. By the second half of the sixteenth century, the Taíno were virtually exterminated.

In the early colonization process, some elements of Taíno culture were absorbed by both Spaniards and African slaves. Most of these were in the realm of language and religion, others had to do with agrarian methods and techniques (see Cassá 1974, Vega 1981, Moya Pons 1983), and they still form part of the local culture. In the Dominican ethnic configuration of today, on the other hand, the indigenous component is of little significance.

The first black slaves were brought to Santo Domingo in the early sixteenth century. At first they were imported in small numbers, but with insufficient Indian manpower in the mines, demand for African slaves increased rapidly. When the gold deposits were exhausted, cane sugar became the main agricultural product and the primary source of wealth. The black slaves' strength, their enormous tolerance for both exhausting labor on



the plantations and for the abuses perpetrated on them by the white slave drivers, converted them into what was seen as an indispensable economic asset.

The slaves did not passively accept the domination of the Spaniards, as demonstrated by the rebellions and revolts that took place starting in the 1520s during the rule of Columbus's son Diego.<sup>1</sup> All rebellions, including those of the maroons, were crushed by the Spaniards.

Although the slaves were not free to follow their traditions and religious rituals, and many sociocultural elements of the dominant system were imposed, one cannot speak of their 'deculturation'. They were able to preserve many of their cultural traits which in the course of time were modified by a complex process of acculturation (Deive 1981).

Today, the African influence in Santo Domingo can be observed in religious practices in which beliefs originating in African traditions have been fused with those of Christian origin. African influence is also apparent in Dominican music and dance, as well as in the language, food and cooking methods (Deive 1981, Rosenberg 1979), and foremost in the racial composition of the people. A high percentage of the Dominican population is 'mulatto'. The intermingling of blacks and whites began in the first days of the colony, in spite of the racial prejudice and discrimination that blacks suffered and that mulattos experienced to a lesser degree since that time.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the sugar industry declined. The discovery of new lands – Mexico and Peru – and the riches that these contributed to the metropolis, left Santo Domingo abandoned. The island which had been Spain's most important colony, fell into decay and poverty which continued for over a century.

Spain, however, insisted on maintaining its commercial monopoly and strongly disapproved of the contraband trade between the Dutch, French and British on the one hand, and the population living in the northern section of the island, on the other. In 1605 and 1606, in what are known as the 'devastations', various important cities in that area were forcibly depopulated. These events were decisive in the history of the island. Since then, buccaneers and adventurers, many of them French, began to invade the empty northern part of the island from Tortuga (Turtle Island), their center of operations. By the Rijswijk Peace Treaty of 1697, ratified by the Treaty of Aranjuez of 1777, the western part of the island – henceforth named Saint Domingue – was ceded to France.

Saint Domingue became a wealthy French colony where tens of thousands of slaves worked on the sugar plantations in subhuman conditions.

Meanwhile, Spanish Santo Domingo's economy was largely autarchic, except for the export of cattle to the neighboring colony (Cordero Michel

1968; Sillié 1970). From then on, few slaves were imported. This economic structure had, of course, a significant impact on social relations and on local culture.

The French Revolution, with its principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, encouraged the revolutionary activities which the blacks of Saint Domingue had developed in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The revolution which triumphed with the proclamation of the State of Haiti in 1804, was the first struggle for independence in America that advocated the abolition of slavery.

The Haitian invasions that took place in 1801, 1805 and 1822 increased the anti-Haitian and racist sentiments of the dominant classes of Spanish Santo Domingo. Anti-Haitian feelings reached their peak in the period of Haitian domination (1822-1844) and in the ensuing war, after Dominican independence had been proclaimed in 1844. Anti-Haitian sentiment and Dominican national identity have developed side by side in the country's history.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of racial discrimination and the repulsion felt towards blacks in the Dominican Republic, the dominant classes did import black men as *braceros* (sugar cane laborers). In the nineteenth century, the emerging Dominican bourgeoisie brought *cocolos* (people from neighboring English-speaking islands) to the country. At the beginning of the present century, Haitians were first imported to work in the sugar cane industry. By now they have become the most important source of labor for the sugar economy. (Del Castillo 1978, 1981). This dependence on Haitian *braceros* did not abate anti-Haitian sentiments. In 1937, the dictator Trujillo ordered the massacre of thousands of Haitians in the border area between both countries.

#### THE RACIST TRADITION IN DOMINICAN LITERATURE

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Dominican writers sought the origins of Dominican culture in the Indian past. *Indigenismo* emerged and flourished in Latin America during the Romantic era. In countries like Mexico and Peru, which had solid native cultures whose multiple features have been preserved until today, the literary interest in aboriginal culture was a logical nationalist response to the dominance of Spanish culture. However, the idealization of the Indian past was not justified in Santo Domingo, where – as has been pointed out – the Taíno culture disappeared rapidly, leaving few traces of its presence.

*Indigenismo* overvalued the Taíno contributions to the Dominican culture, mythicized its image and tried to ignore the contributions of the Africans.

The romantic idealization of the Indians was an ideology that pretended to hide African elements because they were considered a source of abasement. Racial prejudice against the black man was a very important ingredient of the dominant ideology. (See Cordero 1975: 152; Cassá 1976: 64).

*Enriquillo* (1882), the novel of Manuel de Jesús Galván (1834–1920), is the best example of *indigenismo* in all of Latin America's literature.<sup>3</sup> The story of Taíno *cacique* Enriquillo and the rebellion he led in the first decades of the 16th century, was used by Galván to write a novel in which, however, the black people who participated in the first revolts against colonial domination are completely absent. The writer is more interested in the defense of the metropolis than in the defense of the Taíno. (Conde 1978: 20).

In *Fantasías indígenas* (1887), poems of José Joaquín Pérez (1845–1900), and in *Anacaona*, a poetic legend of Salomé Ureña (1850–1897), we read about Taíno culture and the dreadful encounter between Indians and Spaniards. The myth of Dominican *indigenismo* was mostly built upon the poems of these important Dominican writers.

Dominican intellectuals invented other myths that reinforced sentiments of "Dominicanness." The first of these is that of *hispanidad*; the second refers to the inferiority of the Haitian people as compared to Dominicans.<sup>4</sup> Especially during the country's first occupation by the U.S. (1916–1924), some intellectuals tried to find in Spain the ethnic and cultural origins of the Dominicans. In that process of deformation of values, they were presented as white, Catholic, and proud of their Spanish ancestry. (Cassá 1976: 66). E.F. Moscoso Puella (1885–1959) says, in his *Cartas a Evelina* (1941), that Dominicans are, in their majority, "mulattos," but that they are constitutionally white and should never be compared to Haitian *comegente* (cannibals). (Cited in Cordero 1975: 152).

Americo Lugo (1870–1952), one of the country's most important intellectuals in the first half of the present century, adopted a racist thesis according to which the white man is a superior human being, while the black man is vicious and full of physical and moral defects. (See Cassá 1976). Thus, it is not strange that in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first ones of the present century, different governments promoted white immigration to the Dominican Republic. This white population, it was hoped, would "improve" Dominican racial features, productivity and culture. (Del Castillo 1981: 163).

During Trujillo's Era (1930–1961), other intellectuals continued the work that Américo Lugo had begun several years before. Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle (1902–1954) and Joaquín Balaguer (1907–) enriched his thesis and anti-Haitian attitudes reached their highest theoretical elaboration.<sup>5</sup> The ideology of Trujillo's regime identified "Dominicanness" with pro-Hispanic sentiment and rejected Haitian culture. This racist ideology has produced in

our people a general scorn of Haitians. The Dominican has a scale of values in which the white person occupies the highest position, and the black the lowest. We have created euphemisms to hide our black origins. The common man uses words like "light Indian," "dark Indian," *trigueño* (brunette) to refer to the different tones of black and mulatto. (Del Castillo 1981: 148). A black Dominican considers himself superior to a black Haitian. There are popular expressions that reveal a repulsion towards our African past, and to the black Dominican and Haitian culture. (See Cordero 1975):

El burro y el negro son parientes,  
el burro por cabezú,  
y el negro que cree que es gente.

The donkey and the negro are related,  
the donkey because of its big head,  
and the Negro because he thinks he is people.

El negro mete la pata  
a la entrá o a la salida.

The Negro messes up  
when he comes in or when he goes out.

Los blancos huelen a polvo  
y los indios a canela  
y los malditos negros  
a berrenchín de culebra

Whites smell like powder,  
the Indians like cinammon  
and the god damn Negroes  
smell like the steaming breath of snakes.

Peña Batlle considered that the inferiority of Haitians was the result of a natural, biological condition, and he viewed with horror the presence of Haitians in our country. Joaquín Balaguer, who has been President of the Dominican Republic on five occasions (1960-61, 1966-70, 1970-74 and 1974-78, 1986-present) condemned in his *La realidad dominicana* (1947), the laziness, the physical defects, and the degeneration of the Haitian immigrant and his negative influence on the life of our country.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE PAST AS A THEME IN DOMINICAN LITERATURE

The historical novel and history through fiction have interested many of our writers from the last century to the present. (Alcántara Almánzar 1984). In several novels we can find echoes of the wars and struggles Dominicans waged to overcome foreign domination or dictatorship. Dominican novels give a full picture of *caudillismo* and its political effects on national life; eloquent descriptions of fauna and flora; and they depict the ways of thinking, feeling and behaving of different social classes.

César Nicolás Penson (1855-1901) in his *Cosas añejas* (1891), following *Tradiciones peruanas* of Ricardo Palma, sought his inspiration in local tradition. Penson was a writer with a remarkable control of the narrative, and

although his texts are always subordinated to tradition and historical legends, he succeeds in giving them life through a nimble prose. In *Cosas añejas* there is a strong antipathy toward Haitians. Racial prejudices are also obvious in "Las vírgenes de Galindo," one of his most popular writings, in which Haitians are compared with fierce beasts.

However, racial discrimination and political condemnation are not always so explicit. In *Baní o Engracia y Antoñita* (1892), a novel of customs of Francisco Gregorio Billini (1844-1898), black people are practically absent as important characters, and this absence is very significant in a country whose majority is "mulatto". Baní is a town where white immigrants settled in the past century, and where even today one can find their descendants; but the number of blacks and mulattos from Baní is greater than people generally believe. Racial prejudice has always been present in Baní skin color is still directly related to social status.

Tales of the struggle for independence and the War of Restoration (1863-65) have been magnificently told by Federico García Godoy (1857-1924). The historical novel acquired a new stature in his hands. Systematically, he related nineteenth century history in his novels *Rufinito* (1908), *Alma dominicana* (1911) and *Guanuma* (1914). García Godoy was a nationalist and a liberal who underlined the threat of *caudillismo* and of political and military ambitions generally to the democratic life of the country. Anti-Haitian sentiment is also present in García Godoy's novels, but he emphasized above all the problems of sovereignty, and of the instability of the Dominican political process.

The excesses of Ulises Heureaux's dictatorship are shown in *La sangre* (1914), a novel by Tulio Manuel Cestero (1877-1955). Heureaux ruled the country with "an iron fist" in the last decades of the past century. He had Haitian ancestors and was of lower-class origin. His actions during the war against Spain (1863-65) and the protection of Gregorio Luperón, a leading political *caudillo* helped his career. Once in power, Heureaux tried to perpetuate himself in government. He used torture, espionage and corruption. In Cestero's novel, there are descriptions that show the terrible condition of being black in a society ruled by a racially prejudiced class. The novel portrays Heureaux with ironic and socially critical overtones. However, other characters are described in a way showing racial prejudice (see Cordero 1975: 153).

Max Henríquez Ureña (1885-1970), following the elite tradition of Dominican social thought, wrote four books under the title of *Episodios dominicanos*, as Benito Pérez Galdós had done with Spanish history in his *Episodios nacionales*. In *La independencia efímera* (1983), *La conspiración de los Alcarrizos* (1941), *El Arzobispo Valera* (1944) and *El ideal de los*

*trinitarios* (1951), the writer presents different moments of Dominican history since 1821. He focuses on the participation dominant groups in the process of Independence, and recreates the antagonisms between Haiti and the new-born Dominican Republic.

Other twentieth century writers however, such as Ramón Marrero Arísty (1913–1959), Juan Bosch (1909–) and Marcio Veloz Maggiolo (1936–) present new images of black men in their novels and short stories. Veloz Maggiolo (1977) wrote an interesting typology of the Haitian theme in Dominican literature in which he says Haitians have been treated in five different ways: “flattered”, “attacked”, “adulterated”, “pitied” and “integrated”.

In *Over* (1939), Marrero Arísty describes in a heart-breaking way the life of sugar cane laborers on North American plantations, prior, that is, to Trujillo's acquisition of most of the sugar cane factories. In Marrero Arísty's novel, Dominicans and Haitians are not separated by racial barriers: they suffer together from exploitation, misery and injustice. Everyone lives in the *batey* (the compound of plantation workers) under the worst possible conditions. In the short story *Luis Pie* by Juan Bosch, a Haitian man is the victim of hate and harassment. Bosch presents a picture of friendly feeling and pity toward the Haitian character, unfairly accused of arson in a cane field. Veloz Maggiolo, in *La vida no tiene nombre*, gives a modern and demythicized vision of Dominicans and Haitians living together during the first United States occupation.

#### DOMINICAN LITERATURE COMING OF AGE

During the first thirty years of the twentieth century, the Dominican Republic went through many hard and varied sociopolitical experiences. In a period of twelve years two presidents were assassinated (Ulises Heureaux in 1899 and Ramon Caceres in 1911), there were numerous rebellions by dissident groups and frequent confrontations of political factions that provoked an anarchy that seemed practically uncontrollable. To crown all, the country was occupied by the United States Marines.

*Postumismo* was the most relevant literary movement of the first three decades of the twentieth century. Domingo Moreno Jimenes (1899–) became its central figure. With *Postumismo*, a truly Dominican poetry was born; for the first time there was a search for what is Dominican, for essential values as well as for trivialities, for *campesino* life. However, this eagerness for finding what was authentically Dominican limited this poetry and was the main reason for the impoverishment of its expression. Besides, the postumists

believed that authenticity consisted in only writing about Dominican themes and they scorned the tremendous contributions of the North American and European vanguard: Ultraism, Futurism, Creationism. They even thought that by trying to eschew the universal literary tradition they would avoid influences that they judged pernicious. That was a grave error that would be costly to Dominican literature.

Domingo Moreno Jimenes has written a great part of the most authentic Dominican poetry for more than fifty years. The thematic gamut of that poetry runs from the trivial to the philosophical, and from the social to the naturalistic, without showing racial prejudice. *Postumismo* did not last long as a movement, but the influence that its followers have exerted on later Dominican poetry can be easily seen. It shunned rhythm and rhyme. In *Postumismo*, there are no strictly poetic words; any word is material for poetry.

In a short poem, "El haitiano", Moreno Jimenes gives a new view of Haitian man. He does not see the color of his skin but his moral values. The Haitian man is a poor, good man:

Este haitiano que todos los días  
hace lumbre en su cuarto  
y me llena las fosas nasales de humo;  
este haitiano  
que no puede prescindir de la cuaba,  
y prefiere tabaco del fuerte  
y aguardiente del malo,  
es bueno a su modo,  
y a su modo rico,  
y a su modo pobre.  
!Bendito los seres que maltrata el hombre!  
!Bienaventuradas las cosas humildes  
que se yerguen siempre sobre el polvo frío  
de todas las cosas!...

This Haitian that every day  
builds a fire in his room  
and fills my nostrils with smoke;  
this Haitian  
that cannot do without the Jamaican rosewood,  
and prefers strong tobacco  
and bad liquor,  
is good in his own way,  
and rich in his own way,  
and poor in his own way,  
Blessed all beings that man mistreats!  
Fortunate all humble things that  
stand always over the cold dust  
of all things!...

Tomás Hernández Franco (1904–1952) was one of the group of the Independent Poets and the author of the epic poem *Yelidá* (1942). *Yelidá*, the daughter of a white man (Erick, a Norwegian) and a black woman (Madam Suquí, a Haitian), embodies the conflicts, worries and beliefs of the mulatto. Hernández Franco combined various levels: the ethnic, the mythic and the social, and achieved a masterly synthesis.

Regarding poetry with the Negro as its theme, Manuel del Cabral (1907–) stands out as perhaps the best known Dominican poet abroad. Del Cabral has an original and powerful verse that has elevated the theme of blackness to first-class standing. It is he who dignifies a theme traditionally rejected in

Dominican poetry; a theme avoided and deformed by the great twentieth century poets<sup>7</sup>. Black people – as has been pointed out – have almost always occupied the lowest levels of Dominican society, and this exploitation has battered them cruelly through four centuries of history. It is to this badly-treated man, degraded by the dominant classes that Del Cabral directs his verses. The poetry of Del Cabral, especially *Compadre Mon* and *Tropico Negro*, contains, together with erotic and ritual elements, an enormous amount of social protest:

Hombres negros pican  
sobre piedras blancas,  
tienen en sus picos enredado el sol.  
Y como si a ratos se exprimieran algo...

lloran sus espaldas gotas de charol.

Hombres de voz blanca, su piel negra  
lavan,  
la lavan con perlas de terco sudor.

Rompen la alcancía salvaje del monte,

y cavan la tierra, pero al hombre no.  
(*Trópico Picanedrero*)

Black men chip over white stones,

they have the sun entangled in their picks.  
And as if sometimes they would squeeze  
something...

their backs cry drops of lacquer.

Men of white voices, they wash their  
black skin  
they wash it wit pearls of stubborn  
sweat.

They break the savage earthen ball  
of the mountain,  
and they dig the earth, but not the man.  
(*Stonecutter Tropic*)

Of the group of writers in exile, Pedro Mir (1913–) became a formidable figure in Dominican social poetry with the publication of *Hay un país en el mundo* (1949). Mir had begun by publishing love poetry in which one could see a great influence from Federico García Lorca, but little by little he got into social problems in his own style. While never completely abandoning existential themes, he reached mastery with a more radical and accusatory focus. His poetry, however, lacks the epic spirit of the great contemporary social poets; his is a lyric poetry *par excellence* distinguished by its intimacy. In the realm of Negro poetry, his greatest contribution is, without a doubt, “Poema dell llanto trigueño,” in which social and racial aspects are combined with sentimental elements<sup>8</sup>.

Manuel Rueda (1921–) began to publish his works in the issues of the *Poesía Sorprendida*’s magazine after his return from Chile, where he had made contact with renowned poets. Rueda is an intellectual of many facets. As a poet he is among the best in Dominican literature. He has mastered the classical patterns, especially the sonnet, and his poetry is the result of a profound reflection about the musical and rhythmic possibilities of the



language. His preferred themes are to be found among the intimate traditions and customs of man: religion, magic, human isolation. In his *Cantos de la frontera*, he focuses on the divisions that exist between brothers: Haitians and Dominicans. The poem does not refer to racial prejudice or discrimination against the Black man, but to the separation of human beings who share the island:

Allí donde el Artibonito corre  
distribuyendo la hojarasca  
hay una línea,  
un fin,  
una barrera de piedra oscura y  
clara  
que infinitos soldados recorren  
y no cesan de guardar.

There, where the Artibonite runs,  
distributing the fallen leaves  
there is a line,  
an end,  
a barrier of dark and clear stone  
that infinite soldiers traverse and  
do not cease to guard.

Al pájaro que cante de este lado  
  
uno del lado opuesto tal vez res-  
pondería.  
Pero esta es la frontera  
y hasta los pájaros se abstienen  
de conspirar,  
mezclando sus endechas.  
(*Fragmento I*)

To the bird who would sing from  
this side  
one from the opposite side maybe  
would answer.  
But this is the frontier  
and even the birds abstain from  
conspiring  
mixing their mournful songs.  
(*Fragment I*)

#### THE PRESENT

The death of the dictator Trujillo in 1961 signaled a transcendental date for Dominican literature. From that point on, the number of publications was to grow considerably and many authors who had remained in the shadows of a forced silence began bringing out their unpublished papers. As for liberty of expression, the fact that censorship fell to its lowest point in the years immediately following his death, opened the country to a flood of hitherto prohibited works by both great foreign and Dominican poets and narrators. As some exiled writers returned to the country, some of them spearheaded an artistic renaissance that had already begun in the years preceding the assassination.

The writers of the sixties were not of one generation: they were of different ages, literary preferences, and styles of writing. The only thing they all more or less had in common, at least at first, was the desire to make use of the

climate of political expansion and ideological opening-up of Dominican society. A new theme emerged; the majority then wrote about sociopolitical questions: the injustice of the dictatorship; the failure of the country's first democratic experiment; the expedition, persecution, and slaughter of the guerrilla fighters; and the Civil War of April, 1965<sup>9</sup>.

The old thesis of the black man's inferiority was revised and debated. Poets began writing from a different point of view. From thereon, it was not a white poet writing about black themes anymore, but black and mulatto poets looking for their origins, showing with pride their vital situation, their beliefs and feelings. Among the most important voices of the new generation are Juan Sánchez Lamouth (1929–1965), Ramón Franciso (1929–) and Norberto James (1945–) who have tried to express with dignity the black man's ethos<sup>10</sup>.

#### NOTES

1. The first black slave revolt occurred on December 26, 1522 on the sugar plantation of Don Diego Columbus (see Saco 1965: 175–176).
2. The Haitian sociologist Pierre-Charles (1974) states that Dominican national identity was forged out of both an anti-Haitian and an anti-Spanish sentiment.
3. Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1963: 153) names three major literary works in the *Indigenismo* tradition: *Cumaná* (1871) by Juan León Mera; *Enriquillo* (1882) by Manuel de Jesús Galván, and *Tabaré* (1886) by Juan Zorilla de San Martín.
4. Mercedes Acosta (1973) believes that racism appears during the occupation of Santo Domingo by Haiti in the early nineteenth century. Apparently it was the expression of a 'nationalist ideology' based on historical and cultural differences between the two countries.
5. Peña Batlle is considered the most important racist thinker. He believed in the 'natural' inferiority of the Haitians. Balaguer has followed his footsteps in several books (see Cassá 1976: 82).
6. In the 1983 edition of his *La isla al revés* Balaguer ratifies his opinions about Haitians.
7. As James J. Davies (1982) observes, Del Cabral was, of course, not alone in his literary concerns for the Haitians. The theme was also treated by Juan Antonio Alix ('Las bailarinas del judú en la calle Santa Ana' 1904); Domingo Moreno Jimenes ('El haitiano' 1916); Rubén Suro ('Canción del haitiano que espanta mosquitos' 1936); Chery Jimenes Rivera ('La haitianita divertida [sic] 1941); and Fausto del Rosal ('La culebra' 1967 and 'Canto vudú para negros' 1971).
8. 'Poema de llanto trigueño' belongs, in fact, to what has been called *poesía trigueña* by Hector Inchaustegui Cabral (1979).

9. The Dominican Republic's first democratic experiment after Trujillo's death was Bosch's government from Feb. 27–Sept. 25, 1963. A *coup d'état* made an end to it.

10. Sánchez Lamouth is one of the outstanding Afro-Dominican poets. Ramón Francisco has not published much but his poem 'Patria montonera' is a good example of the integration of racial elements. Norberto James, a descendant of *cocolos*, tries to find out his origins in his poems 'Los inmigrantes'.

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## REVIEW ARTICLE

### A CARIBBEAN MISSION: BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS – AND MORE BLOOD

*C.G.A. Oldendorp's History of the Mission of the Evangelical Brethren on the Caribbean Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John*, JOHANN JAKOB BOSSARD (ed.). English edition and translation by ARNOLD R. HIGHFIELD and VLADIMIR BARAC. Ann Arbor MI: Karoma, 1987. xxxv + 737 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.95)

In 1767 C.G.A. Oldendorp, a German inspector of missions for the Moravian Church, traveled to the Danish Virgin Islands where he spent the next nineteen months informing himself about local mission activities, the heterogeneous population of Europeans and slaves, and exotic flora and fauna. Between 1768 and 1776, first at Bethlehem in Pennsylvania, then back in Europe, he produced a report of some 3273 manuscript pages. J.J. Bossart (the usual spelling), a Swiss Moravian with no Caribbean experience, has described how Oldendorp had been unable to "arrive at a decision to omit any important matter" and how "the book [manuscript] itself expanded to unexpected proportions as a result." "Since", he continued, "it could be seen in advance that the high price that the book would carry upon publication would prevent it from finding its way into all but a few of the hands for which it was intended and since the author was hindered in bringing his work to completion, I took on that task with his approval" (p. xxxiii). Although only careful study at Herrnhut would permit a systematic evaluation of the changes Bossart made, the work that was published at Barby in 1770 as *C.G.A. Oldendorps Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brueder auf den caraibischen Inseln S. Thomas, S. Croix und S. Jan*, "Herausgegeben durch Johann Jakob Bossard," was clearly a significantly altered version of

Oldendorp's report. Bossart himself describes how, although he left the natural history materials largely as written by Oldendorp, he "completely reworked his report on the African nations" (p. xxxiv) – which for many historians and ethnologists constitutes the work's main interest. Moreover, the translators suggest (p. xxiv) that Bossart effected even greater changes and additions in those sections of the book relating to mission history, which are far more voluminous than the "African" materials. In any case, Oldendorp himself wrote an 80-page critique of Bossart's revisions, preserved at Herrnhut, that attests to his own unhappiness upon seeing Bossart's handiwork, which deleted more than half of what he had written, and modified much of the rest (Gilbert 1986: 6; Rupp-Eisenreich 1985: 167; Brown 1983: 39).

This new edition, announced on its advertising brochure as "an absorbing testimony of faith and adventure" (the missionaries, to be sure, suffered mightily) and described, on its blurb, as "probably the best and earliest ethnography of the Western Hemisphere that has come down to us" (Sir Edmund R. Leach) and "a model report" (Melville J. Herskovits), may nevertheless strike many Caribbeanists as something of a letdown. The translation and the notes are workmanlike, and the price is right. But the editors provide very little historical contextualization. And the biggest surprise, for those of us who had previously read "only" the twenty or so pages previously translated by Brown (1983), may be that these constitute fully four of the five chapters that Oldendorp devoted to the interviews with salt-water slaves about their African homelands that so fascinated Herskovits (1958: 43–44). The new edition is restyled, on its dust jacket and spine (though not on the title page), *A Caribbean Mission*.

The dust jacket also features (with no explanatory commentary, nor is there any in the book itself) the "Erstlingsbild", a masterpiece of mid-century Moravian iconography, painted by Johann Valentin Haidt (Heydt). The painter made three versions (at Herrnhag [now at Zeist], at Herrnhut [destroyed during World War II], and in Bethlehem [depicted on the dust jacket, but so dimly one can make out few details]). It represents the first baptized heathens from the missions in the Danish Virgin Islands, Persia, Greenland, Armenia, the Caucasus, and South Africa, and among North American Indians and the slaves of the American South. The Lord, seated on a cloud and surrounded by angels, prominently displays the wounds on his hands, feet, and side; clearly, the side wound holds pride of place. A text, from Revelation 14: 4, held aloft on a banner, proclaims, "These have been redeemed from mankind as first-fruits for God and the Lamb." (The 1747 Herrnhag version of "First-Fruits" is reproduced in Price n.d.)

Oldendorp's *History* might best be evaluated in the context of other

eighteenth-century Caribbean travel reports. Divided into two unequal parts (with many subdivisions), the book presents first "Various Information on the Geography, Natural History, and Political History of the Islands Treated in This Report" (pp. 3–265) and then the history of the Moravian mission on the three islands (pp. 267–622). The opening sections on geography and geology, the Caribs (which the author explicitly "borrows" from Moravian missionaries in Suriname), and flora and fauna strike me as less interesting and detailed than those of many earlier or contemporary accounts: Las Casas, Oviedo and Abbad on the Spanish islands; Du Tertre, Rochefort, Labat, and Moreau de Saint-Méry on the French; Ligon, Leslie, Long, and Edwards on the English; Hartsinck and Stedman on the "Wilde Kust" – to mention only a few. And the natural history engravings that grace many of these other works are notably absent here, though Oldendorp made a number of drawings in the field, fifty-one of which are preserved at Herrnhut (p. xxiii, Gilbert 1986: 5). (This is not to imply, however, that Oldendorp's descriptions, supplemented by the translators' notes, may not present special interest to those particularly concerned with the Virgin Islands.)

For most Caribbeanists or Afro-Americanists, the central chapters are found in Book III (pp. 137–265); three sections on the "whites" (from their health conditions to their character), four sections on African homelands (geography, marriage, justice, death and burial, and religion), and ten sections focused on the experience of slavery, beginning with capture and sale, passing through creole (Negerhollands) speech (including some interesting texts), and ending with "Customs and Practices of Negroes in the West Indies." It was Oldendorp's method in the "African" sections that caught Herskovits's eye: the inspector decided to interview some fifty "Negroes from almost thirty nations ... [choosing] only baptized Negroes and those who were known to be intelligent and honest people" (p. 159). But Oldendorp was properly modest about his results: "I had hoped to come to the point of being able to present something more extensive and reliable about these nations than that which had been known hitherto. However, my hopes in this matter have remained for the most part unfulfilled, due to the overwhelming ignorance of these people, together with their lack of ability to form their ideas properly and express them clearly" (Ibid.).

Oldendorp's descriptions of remembered and largely decontextualized African "customs" move "tribe"-by-"tribe" to the east, beginning in Senegal; they end with a 29-item wordlist presented in some two dozen languages. But even more interesting are the glimpses we catch of Oldendorp's "informants" themselves: he interviews three Mandongos who admit to having participated in wartime cannibalism; he meets the brother of an Amina king and the former commander of a 3000-man army; and he speaks with a number of

people who give moving testimonies about the process of their enslavement. From these interviews Oldendorp, while never wavering from the Moravian line that the institution of slavery is part of God's grand design ("The teaching of our savior Jesus Christ prescribes the duty of Christian slaves toward their masters clearly, emphatically, and completely, and ... this duty proceeds from motives that are independent of the character of the master and his conduct toward his servants, be it harsh or generous" [p. 229]), nevertheless draws striking conclusions about the meaning of the experience of enslavement for its victims (anticipating the thrust of Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death*).

Based on the examples cited to this point regarding the manner in which free Negroes [in Africa] have fallen into the condition of slavery, it can be concluded that the West Indian slaves constitute a mixed society, composed of the wealthy as well as the poor and the higher as well as the lower classes, despite the marked change in their outward status that is experienced by all of them. The state of slavery here has accomplished something similar to what is achieved by death in the destinies of all men, namely the removal of all external distinctions among them. The children of princes, noblemen, merchants, and commoners are all placed on a footing of total equality, the only difference being that the greater the privileges enjoyed by the individual in his previous condition, the greater the difficulty in accepting the new status [p. 211].

One would have to conceive of the Negroes as totally devoid of emotions to imagine that they let themselves be separated from their fatherland, their gods, and their possessions without experiencing deep sorrow. Thus torn asunder, husband from wife, parents from children, children from parents, and brother from brother, they are taken across the sea by strangers whose language they do not understand, being able neither to discern their destination nor anticipate the life or death that lies ahead of them there [p. 215].

And although the local Moravians were active participants in Danish mercantile capitalism, owning a number of slaves themselves, Oldendorp's dogged empiricism encourages a number of references to resistance and rebellion (from shipboard revolts during the middle passage to frequent plantation suicides); he matter-of-factly interviews a recaptured maroon recidivist each of whose feet, at a different time, has been lopped off by the executioner's axe; and there are several detailed references to long-lived maroon communities, especially on St. Croix.

The bulk of the volume is concerned with the history of Moravian efforts – thirty-seven years' worth by the time of Oldendorp's visit – to convert the heathen slaves. This story, potentially exciting not only to hagiographers but to all those interested in the sociology of conversion and Afro-American religion, ends up sounding rather flat. (Indeed, there is disappointingly little on the religious beliefs and practices of non-Christian slaves; at one point the



very existence of "religious observation" among "Heathen Negroes" is denied [p. 262]). The authors (for here the hand of Bossart seems especially heavy) have produced a synthetic, smoothed-over account. Drawing on what must have been thousands of pages of detailed daily diaries kept by the 143 missionaries who served during the period (and many of which are probably still preserved at Herrnhut), they present an orderly account that gives little feel for the encounters (the conflicts, contradictions, and negotiations – social, political, and religious) that characterized relations between missionaries and missionized. (There are, however, some fine pages on the conflicts between the missionaries, protected by the Danish Crown, and the local planters who wanted their slaves left in peace.) The missionizing process had been intense and massive. No fewer than 4560 people had been baptized and literally thousands more were eagerly awaiting their turn by the time Oldendorp left for America and Europe. And these conversions tended to be profound, not simply nominal.

How and why did these Africans and their children, whose religious beliefs were a world away from these extremist German Pietists, make their decisions to be "born again"? What special appeal did the sensual, anti-rational Christocentrism of Count Zinzendorf, the rhetoric of bloody redemption, the lurid focus on the wounds, hold out to the slaves? (Not long before Oldendorp's visit to the Caribbean, his pious brethren at Herrnhut had adamantly declared,

We stick to the Blood and Wounds Theology. We will preach nothing but Jesus the Crucified. We will look for nothing else in the Bible but the Lamb and his Wounds, and again Wounds, and Blood and Blood. We stick to the lambkin and His little Side-wound. It is useless to call this folly. We dote upon it. We are in love with it. We shall stay forever in the little side-hole, where we are so unspeakably blessed [Hutton 1909: 276]).

Unfortunately, Oldendorp's translators provide little of the social-historical or theological background necessary for such an analysis, writing almost as if they assume an audience of rapt Moravians who find Zinzendorf's mid-century extravagances familiar, if faintly old-fashioned. Nevertheless, what does shine through those few first-hand examples the chroniclers present of writing or speech by the newly-converted slaves is that these latter had fully internalized the exotic rhetoric that came from far-off Herrnhut: "When I think of how my Savior sweated bloody sweat for me, how He shed His blood for me, how He has given His life on the cross for me. I feel so small that I cannot humble myself enough" (p. 511); "I feel real hunger and thirst for Him and His blood" (p. 412); "This poor and miserable little worm would like to learn the proper way to love the Savior" (p. 412). And their favorite hymns

included: "Oh World, See Your Life Dangling There on the Cross" and "The Blood of Christ and His Righteousness, That is Your Embellishment and Your Cloak of Honor" (p. 496). They had, in any case, come a long way from the banks of the Niger or the Congo

The loss effected by the decision of Oldendorp-Bossart to synthesize, rather than excerpt from, the missionary diaries is most readily seen by comparing Moravian Bishop Staehelin's compilation, covering approximately the same period, for Suriname (Staehelin: 1913-1919). In that work, which is built explicitly out of diary extracts, the full range of missionary-slave (and missionary-maroon) encounters is evoked and the contrastive assumptions of each party emerge with a vividness that, unfortunately, is masked in the Virgin Islands case. (The richest of Staehelin's materials, in English translation, are included in Prince n.d., now in final stages of preparation.) In an erudite analysis, Rupp-Eisenreich (1985) has suggested that much of the blame for the perspective of "Oldendorp's" *History* may lie with Bossart. His introduction of a universalist, generalist perspective had the effect, she claims, of "Westernizing" Oldendorp's more particularistic reporting (which had, in contrast, tried to preserve differences among informants and ethnic groups). And she traces this ideologically-driven process forward in time through German, French, and English proto-anthropologists who drew on Oldendorp's work (including James Cowles Prichard, one of the founders of the Ethnological Society of London, whose *The Natural History of Man* [1843] translated passages of Oldendorp, yet further smoothed over, in the service of a broader argument for the founding of a science of anthropology).

The integral republication in English of a rarely-read Caribbean "classic" is always welcome. That Karoma has produced Oldendorp's work in a handsome edition, ably translated, and at a reasonable price merits special commendation. Even if Sir Edmund's encomium is something of an exaggeration, this *History* is well-worth the attention of every Caribbeanist. And it whets the appetite for the flood of related historical and linguistic materials that are apparently now in preparation for publication in Germany, not the least of which is a *complete* critical edition of Oldendorp's original manuscript; edited by Peter Neuman and Charles Peters (Gilberg 1986: 6).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Colonial madness: mental health in the Barbadian social order.* LAWRENCE E. FISHER. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1985. xvi + 215 pp. (Cloth US\$ 32)

For Dr. Fisher, madness in Barbados is a "master symbol" which teaches lower-class Barbadians about themselves. It teaches them to recognize their place at the bottom of the social class hierarchy, and that their lot is to stay there. For lower-class Barbadians madness can't be helped; it comes naturally and, once it comes, it is there for good. In fact, ordinary people have to take good care to avoid going mad and they have to watch what they do and say lest others think them mad. Madness is as much a part of being Barbadian as being black, lower class and poor. There are three types of madness: sensible madness, sweet madness, and *serus* (serious) madness. The first is when people are wild and foolish, but not out of control; the second is when people are foolish, unaware, but not violent; and the third, *serus* madness, is wild and foolish behaviour which is uncontrolled and without a purpose.

But it is not what the mad in Barbados say, think and do so much as how those who live with the mad react to them that is the main concern of this book. Dr. Fisher thinks that the lower class in Barbados accepts madness far too easily and without questioning – in much the same way they accept their lower-class status, the inferiority which goes with being black, their poverty and the watered down Englishness of Barbadian culture. Like class, race and poverty (and Fisher might have added history too) madness is natural, unavoidable and unchangeable in the Barbadian view. By definition madness is failure and inadequacy, so its presence among them as a natural streak, and the frequent presence of mad people in their midst is continuing evidence of

weakness and failure among lower class Barbadians. Madness is both sign and symbol of this inferiority complex.

The source of this inferiority complex, and the cause of the racially based class structure which keeps Barbadians socially and economically downtrodden, is the colonial past still alive in the present. In spite of political independence, colonialism has maintained a more than spectral cultural grip on the lower class of Barbados. Brought to the island 250 years ago from Africa as slaves, the Blacks have remained slaves in all but the letter of the law. In madness, the slave image is perpetuated through continual self-denigration. White culture, especially English culture, and white people are looked up to and regarded as naturally superior but unattainable. White good; black bad.

Fisher argues that what Barbadians have not seen for themselves is that what is really driving them mad and sending them to the mental hospital is not their own deficiencies but the colonial system, which also keeps them socially and economically poor. They, in their ignorance, think it is the black man's lot to go mad, to be poor and to be envious and jealous of each other. This book is Fisher's epistle unto the Barbadians. Its effect is more likely to resemble that of the mental hospital on Barbadian patients - "What use is the mental hospital?" asks one patient, "When you comes out people is just the same!"

Fisher is aware that his reference to lower-class Barbadians as colonial may seem anachronistic, but I wonder whether it is just their imagination. For has not the economic exploitation aspect of colonialism been taken over from the British by the Americans? The *New Yorker* advertisement cited by Fisher for British Barbados is addressed to American tourists and invites them to stay in American-owned hotels where they will be waited on by lower-class Barbadians dressed in British style uniforms. In other words, it is no good Fisher pointing Barbadians to their English colonial past when their American colonial present is perpetuating social difficulties. Throughout the book Fisher likes to emphasize Barbadian insularity and the persistence of a Little England mentality. Barbadian social class and its rigidity is not just compared to English social class but linked to it organically. Yet the evidence for social class in England is Geoffrey Gorer's brief and hardly definitive study. Fisher frequently cites the saying: "The higher the monkey climb, the more he show his tail" to exemplify the tendency of the Barbadian lower class towards self-containment. But this is a very popular pan-Caribbean saying, which is, for example, widely cited in islands to the far west of the region, where there has been no English colonization. In other words, I doubt whether the special conditions required by Fisher for his thesis would hold up to a wider scrutiny.

When he does make comparisons, Fisher can be very slippery. On page 45, for example, he attempts to contrast American and Barbadian psychiatric

patients. American patients are said to seek improvement, Barbadian patients to seek redress. Americans seek the services of psychiatrists who are described as "experts ON failure" while Barbadian patients are described as "experts IN failure". But, of course, American *patients* are also experts in failure and Barbadian *psychiatrists*, like their American counterparts, are experts ON failure. There is no difference, whereas Fisher would have us think there is a complete contrast.

I find it hard to accept in full Fisher's method of argument. He suggests madness resembles Barbadian history because the passive way in which the madman accepts hospitalization *is like* the passive way in which the black man accepted slavery in the past, or the lower-class person accepts his inferior social position today. Yet *serus* madness, for example, is violent and not all Barbadian patients at the hospital are wholly passive and accepting. And does this mean that, in contrast to Barbados, mental patients elsewhere typically protest their hospitalization? The Barbadian view, "once mad, always mad" is said to symbolize race relations because it *is like* the attitude "once black, always black." But even Barbadians fight to ward off insanity whereas they know you can't change skin color (but you can change attitudes to skin color, as you can change attitudes to madness). What I am getting at is that while analogies can be illuminating, they are not explanations. They are useful only when you discover where they cease to apply, for then they can point you to the overlooked or the unforeseen. For instance, Fisher avers that the closedness of madness *is like* the self-containment of lower-class black poverty, which includes its lack of education. Fine as far as it goes: madness, poverty, blackness and class are all self-limiting. But where does the analogy stop? I don't know. This requires research, but I would start to look at the connections between class, cricket and Christianity. Cricket, Christianity and the church are likely outlets which break open class and poverty and help to refuel class.

The combination of Fisher's cultural narrowness and his argument from analogy is exemplified in his devoting a lot of attention to the fact that Barbadians think that too much study ('studiation') ends up in madness. Because they think this, they prevent themselves from getting ahead. But surely this attitude is not peculiar to Barbadians. Isn't genius akin to madness? Won't too much swat addle the brain? Aren't smart alecks too big for their boots?

I suspect that much of the Barbadian attitude to madness reported by Fisher derives not so much from a persistent shadow of colonialism as from the fact that Barbados, like many other Caribbean islands, is small and madness is highly visible. It is, as Fisher notes, a street phenomenon and not even the hospital can be tucked away from the public view like it can in large

urban societies. Like medieval Europeans, present-day Barbadians have to absorb and accommodate the mad, the sick, the lame and the deformed in their midst, as an ongoing part of their everyday lives. It would be very surprising to find there was a complete hiatus, and not a continuity, between the lives of the sane and the insane, and a piecemeal "theory" to explain it.

There is about this book an air which infects its vision. It is an air of smiting liberalism in which the reforming anthropologist sets out to slay the dragon of conservatism with his mighty sword of science. Fisher tells us that poor Barbadians are "confused about their history," and that they are "unaware" of how the race/class/poverty syndrome of colonialism keeps them forever pinned to the mat. They just don't see that their social order is what is driving them mad.

Many Barbadians are unaware that their orientation to madness also expresses their orientation to matters of race and class. That lower-class Barbadians fail to identify the conflation of class and color with 'madness' is further indication of their containment (p. 254).

But do not fear. Riding in on snow-white research grants the well-armed anthropologist will snatch the veil from their eyes so that they can behold for themselves "the mythology of 'madness' to determine the extent to which they have been led to breathe life into the fearful ogre that freezes them where they stand" (p. 155).

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*Acts of identity: Creole-based approaches to language and ethnicity.* R.B. LE PAGE & ANDREE TABOURET-KELLER. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. x + 275 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.50, £ 30.00; Paper US\$ 16.95, £ 9.95)

This book is addressed to "those who come to the literature of sociolinguistics as laymen" (p. 4) and is the product of over thirty years of effort at grappling with creole and contact languages and with the problems of multilingualism. Financially supported from time to time over the years by some nine agencies in all, the two authors attempt to provide a coherent theory different from that of the variationist school of sociolinguistic enquiry. They view variation in linguistic behaviour as the norm, and approach language as essentially idiosyncratic, with the individual acts of identity which people make within

themselves and with each other being major vehicles for establishing such concepts as "a language" or "a community".

In other words, the book looks at "how the individual's idiosyncratic behaviour reflects attitudes towards groups, causes, traditions but is constrained by certain identifiable factors; and how the identity of a group lies within the projections individuals make of the concepts each has about the group..." (p. 2).

The authors claim that their way of looking at things has grown upon them as they struggled to come to terms with the social and linguistic processes they observed going on around them in various Caribbean and other communities in which their field research was conducted. In this, they seem to have experienced the same sort of need to disregard intuition as a possible source of bias, and to use as primary data their observations of language-in-use, a theme echoed again and again in the literature (e.g. Labov 1966: 19, Rickford 1975: 179, Gumperz 1982: 62 and Lesley Milroy 1984: 50). Indeed, borrowing from sociology the term that Lesley Milroy (1980) has so successfully employed, the authors have seen West Indians in terms of their membership to networks, many of which are in the process of formation. It is the process of formation which interests them, they claim, as well as the development of the stereotypes which are the concomitants of membership of the group.

The book which had "innumerable drafts" (p. ix) generously acknowledges the authors' debt to colleagues, to students, to informants over the years. Its basic structure consists in an Introduction, five other chapters, a fairly extensive Bibliography and an Index.

The Introduction discusses the basic strategy being employed, points to differences from the approach of sociolinguists such as William Labov in New York and Peter Trudgill in Norwich, and frankly and openly points to differences in viewpoint between the co-authors as regards what it is essential to stress.

#### For Le Page

it is essential to stress that groups or communities and the linguistic attributes of such groups have no existential locus other than in the minds of individuals, and that groups or communities inhere only in the way individuals behave towards each other.

#### For Tabouret-Keller:

such a formulation would not be sufficient: linguistic items are not just attributes of groups or communities, they are themselves the means by which individuals both identify themselves and identify with others; hence the existential locus of *homo*, be it individuals or groups, is in the language itself.

The book starkly says: "It is Le Page's point of view that has been accepted



both for carrying out the research and for writing this book". Though my own psycho-sociolinguistic preferences support the Tabouret-Keller position, I concede that the material is very well handled from the Le Page perspective.

There is a serious slip on page 8 where Received Pronunciation (RP) is referred to as a dialect, presumably on the same footing as Jamaican Creole or Guyanese Creolese, rather than as merely an accent. A longish Chapter 2 discusses the socio-historical development of some pidgin- and creole-speaking Caribbean communities in the context of European exploration and colonization. Chapter 3 gives a number of sample West Indian texts, and their position at that spot seems to me to interrupt the flow of the narrative, even though I did enjoy reading (again) the story of the Old Higue who sucked her brother's neck. Chapter 4 deals with the sociolinguistic surveys that the authors conducted in the West Indies and among West Indian immigrants in London, and shows the development of the sociolinguistic theory to account for the masses of data collected. Here the verbal activity is described through the use of metaphor: "projection, focussing, diffusion ..." drawn, not from the technical vocabulary of psychology, but from cinema. The authors say:

As the individual speaks he is seen as always using language with reference to the inner models of the universe he has constructed for himself; he projects in words images of that universe (or, of those universes) on to the social screen, and these images may be more or less sharply focussed, or more or less diffuse, in relation to each other or in relation to those projected by others in their interaction with him. (p. 115)

Chapter 5 sets out the analytical framework along with the hypothesis and the constraints within which it is supposed to work, while Chapter 6 extends the theory and involves notions of ethnicity as part of the consideration of sociolinguistic universals. This is really the heart of the matter as the book's subtitle: "Creole-based approaches to language and ethnicity" proclaims. Perhaps because I was familiar with some of what had gone before as it had surfaced from time to time in the Society for Caribbean Linguistics, I found that my expectations about how far the theory had been advanced were not quite fully met.

But then, no model is perfect. It is now the task of scholars in the field to examine the model, refine it and develop it as a coherent framework within which the study of languages in contact may be furthered.

I tested 25 of the items in the Index, and found them all correctly referenced. The book's cover is simple, but attractive, and the quality of the printing and the proof-reading outstanding. I was impressed over the obvious care

taken to ensure the accuracy of the tables and the diagrams and could find no error.

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller are on to a winner with this publication. It is not too technical for the beginner, and the raw data printed should provide others in the field of sociolinguistics with material with which to compare their own.

Needless to say, the book is already on my shelf and in the hands of my students. It is a most stimulating effort and very good value for money.

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*Saba silhouettes: life stories from a Caribbean island*. Julia G. Crane (ed), New York: Vantage Press, 1987. x + 515 pp. (Cloth US\$ 20)

In the summer of 1970, Professor Julia Crane who had previously written a monograph on Saba (*Educated to emigrate: the social organization of Saba*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971), returned to that Dutch Antillean island, this time accompanied by a group of students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who were to be exposed to their first fieldwork experience.

This took the form of taping extensive interviews with a cross-section of Saba's nearly one thousand inhabitants.

Of the 49 life histories originally taped, 28 (nearly half of these produced by Crane) are reproduced *verbatim* in this handsome and large volume.

The editor also wrote a brief historical Introduction, and a Conclusion in which she summarizes some of the main findings.

Each interviewer was provided with a set of suggested questions relating to such topics as early childhood, education, work history, migration, marriage and family, beliefs and orientations, but in practice, each interviewee was left to reminisce freely.

The result is an unstructured yet charming set of autobiographies which enables us to see the last eighty years of Saba's history through some of its inhabitants' eyes.

Small-scale farming, fishing and, above all, sea-faring were the island's main traditional economic activities, and the prolonged absences of a large part of the productive male population became even more pronounced when, from the 'thirties on, many Sabians went to work for the oil refineries in Aruba and Curaçao.

The life stories are filled – at times repetitiously so – with references to this 'postal check economy' and the social consequences it entailed, but they also contain many nostalgic memories of a childhood which combined a strict and austere upbringing in an isolated, poor and challenging environment, with a sense of freedom in a trusted and caring world of one's own, the minuscule scale of which is regretted neither by those who remained nor by those who returned.

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*Facing the sea: a new anthology from the Caribbean region.* ANNE WALMSLEY and NICK CAISTOR (eds.). London and Kingston: Heinemann, 1986. ix + 151 pp. (Paper, £ 3.50)

*Facing the Sea* is an anthology of Caribbean literature intended for use in the senior forms of secondary schools in the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean. It is, in one sense, a sequel to *The Sun's Eye*, edited by one of the present editors, Anne Walmsley, and published eighteen years ago for students in the first three years of secondary school. The purpose of the first volume (which appeared when the school curricula tended to ignore Caribbean literature) was to introduce the students to the English literature of their own countries and their English-speaking neighbors. The second volume is

intended to enlarge the students' knowledge of this literature (which, by now, is not only much more extensive but firmly planted in the curricula) and to introduce them to the literature, in translation, of their Spanish-, French-, and Dutch-speaking neighbors.

Partly because of these separate aims, there are striking differences between the two volumes, illustrating the development of Caribbean literature and of the critical and pedagogical response to that literature, as well as the perception of the Caribbean as a region of vast cultural and linguistic variety integrated into a coherent whole. The *Sun's Eye* presented 30 authors, including most of the better known ones (notable exclusions were Edgar Mittelholzer, V.S. Naipaul, and Jean Rhys, whose major Caribbean novel had just appeared); *Facing the Sea* offers 67, of whom 23 (probably too small a percentage, given the aims of the editors) are from non-English speaking countries (15 Spanish, 6 French, and 2 Dutch). Although some of the Anglophone authors reappear in the second volume – Michael Anthony, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Timothy Callender, Wilson Harris, Dennis Scott, Arthur J. Seymour, and Derek Walcott – several of the best known ones – for example, George Lamming, John Hearne, and Samuel Selvon – do not. The remaining authors are made up of some who were overlooked in the first volume, others who have gained prominence in the intervening years, and still others who are relatively new. Most of the non-Anglophone writers – Luis Palés Matos, Alejo Carpentier, Aimé Césaire, Juan Rulfo, and so on – are well-known, both within and outside the Caribbean.

Another significant difference, which can be only partially explained by the history of women's writing in the Caribbean, is that, whereas the first volume excluded women authors, with the one exception of poet Agnes Maxwell-Hall from Jamaica, the second volume includes 13. However, this number still appears relatively low when one realizes that such important authors as Simone Schwarz-Bart, Maryse Condé, Erna Brodber, Merle Hodge, Zee Edgell, and Jamaica Kincaid are not represented. Moreover, of these 13 authors, 7 are Jamaicans and only 2 are non-Anglophone.

The most obvious difference between the two volumes is in their formats. *The Sun's Eye* simply presented the selections (many of which were excerpts from novels), offering no aids to their study, because "children's response should be fresh and direct" and "critical jargon and unnecessary background details confuse and inhibit." (p. iv) *Facing the Sea*, in contrast, perhaps because the older readers, having been corrupted by literary explications, are deemed incapable of such response, is divided into a preface, by Edward Kamau Brathwaite; a thorough introduction; eight carefully designed sections of literature (containing a minimum of excerpts); and an extensive pedagogical aid for preparing students for the CXC English B examination,

Section B. Both volumes contain biographical notes on the authors, though the list of the second volumes does not convey either the intimate charm or the telling details of the notes of the first, which were, in many cases, composed by the authors themselves and provide, even now, information on them that might not be found elsewhere.

But *Facing the Sea* is intended to do far more than prepare students for an examination. Indeed, the aims of the editors are very ambitious. Their selections are meant not only to "help young people to discover how their neighbours, with a very different colonial experience and, often, a much longer period of independence, have expressed themselves in writing", but also to "complement their study of these countries through other disciplines, deepen their understanding of the variety of peoples around them; sharpen their awareness of their own society and environment; provide them with opportunities to appraise critically, and relate to their own lives, a far wider range of literary expression; give their imagination wings and encourage them to write with greater freedom and daring themselves." (p. viii) Thus, the editors aim, among other things, to perpetuate the tradition of the Caribbean literature they are presenting by inspiring their readers to produce more of it. This volume may do just that – but not necessarily for the reason the editors seem to imagine.

Anthologies tend to be rearrangements of one collection of literature, but such is not the case with this volume. There are very few anthologies of the literature of the wider Caribbean and the editors have refused to recycle the selections of either those volumes or of the more numerous anthologies of more limited scope. The selections appear to be personal choices of editors who, quite rightly, perceive Caribbean literature as, to a great extent, the story of struggling peoples. The volume begins with a section called "Keeping Going," which determines the cast that all of the succeeding sections take. "Life can be harsh and thankless, especially for those who have neither money nor land, are treated brutally or find their deepest hopes frustrated," the editors explain about this initial section. "It often takes a great deal of strength and courage simply to continue with one's life, knowing that there are few possibilities for improving it at all. But people refuse to give up this belief that things can be improved, that life can be made happier and more just not merely for one person but for the whole of a society." (p. 128) The succeeding divisions follow a conventional pattern for anthologies divided according to topic – "Young and Free," on childhood and youth; "Face to Face," on group conflicts; "Them and Us," on conflicts between the individual and society; "God and Gods," on religious imperatives; "Love," of people, landscapes, ideals; "Outsiders," on identity; and "Coming Through," on the importance of the past – all depicting a peculiarly Caribbean expe-

rience. But each of these divisions carries on the theme established in the first section.

Thus, from the very first story – Harold Sonny Ladoo's "The Quiet Peasant," which depicts the effort of a poor peasant digging for water, his son as his witness – to Robert Lee's "The Choice" to Juan Rulfo's "They Gave us the Land" to Léon Damas' "Hiccups" to V.S. Naipaul's "His Chosen Calling" to Sandra Minott's "Walking Home" to Alejo Carpentier's "The Fugitives" to Linton Kwesi Johnson's "Sonny's Lettah" to Anson Gonzalez's "Who Killed my Son?" to Michael Anthony's "The Patch of Guava" to Clyde Hosein's "The Signature" to Juan Bosch's "The Woman" to Amryl Johnson's "Marcus", the reader is confronted with victims coping with some kind of injustice. But always the message is that the end of struggle is defeat, even, by implication, for future generations. The efforts of Ladoo's peasant are futile, his son is witness to his defeat in death, and there is no reason to expect any future efforts of the son to fare any better.

Given this pervasive pessimism, one might expect this collection to have exactly the opposite effect upon the students whom it is intended to inspire. But theme may belie effect: the very specificity of the Caribbean worlds created by the authors represented here may counteract this persistent message. In Earl Lovelace's "Those Heavy Cakes," such a world disappears without anyone even struggling to save it – it just slips away. But the students, far from despairing, will very likely simply want to read more such stories – and to try, perhaps, writing some themselves – simply because they are good stories, well told.

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*West Indian literature and its social context.* MCWATT, MARK (ed.). Cave Hill, Barbados, Department of English, 1985.

Like its predecessor (*Critical issues in West Indian literature*, Smilowitz and Knowles, 1984), *West Indian literature in its social context* explores the dualistic function of the cultural constraints which label literary works as West Indian and simultaneously underscore the writers' universality. In the process of this exploration, these critics (faculty and post-graduate students of the University of the West Indies, the College of the Virgin Islands and the University of Guyana) demonstrate that regional criticism at its best attests to

a similar duality of function: On the one hand, such criticism reflects the critic's experiential understanding of the social and historical processes which shape West Indian culture; and, on the other, it testifies to the critic's practised awareness of the tradition of Western literary criticism. On both counts, these essays enrich the reader's appreciation of the range and quality of West Indian literature. Furthermore, because each critic in this collection dissects particular facets of the complex relationship between West Indian writer and West Indian society and reveals or implies the degree to which the writer is both agent and patient of his or her cultural condition, the essays collectively function both as an elegy to West Indian literary colonialism and as a paean to the inchoate initiation of West Indian critics into the rites of a critical perspective which is at once regional and eclectic.

In the collective attempt to test some parameters of regional criticism – an attempt which is implicit in the title of this book – the essays convincingly demonstrate the regional critics' ability to come to grips with socially related nuances of style and meaning which may go unexamined or even unnoticed by other critics but which, when fully apprehended, affect the interpretation of the literary product not only as a cultural document but also as a work of art. This point is particularly applicable to the essays in the book's fourth and final section, "Mirrors of contemporary society." However, these same essays, like the others in the collection, may be said to reflect the critics' eclecticism – that is, their integration of universal generic and stylistic constructs with their appreciation of indigenous literary material.

*West Indian literature and its social context* also documents the attraction which V.S. Naipaul continues to exert on the critical consciousness. However, the essays about "Naipaul and sexuality" (the book's third section) are generally less concerned with polemic postures regarding Naipaul's writings than they are with the relationship between Naipaul's psycho-sexual vision and the nature of his craft, a consideration which propels these essays far beyond the confines of partisan ideology and into the realm of creative criticism. Indeed, the kind of analyses performed on Naipaul works by these critics go a long way toward vindicating Naipaul's continuing critical appeal.

While reading *West Indian literature and its social context*, especially the essays in the section entitled "Literature as performance," one becomes acutely aware of the tremendous potential of West Indian folk patterns which exist in West Indian literature not only as interesting and informative substrata but as the very matrix of West Indian art and, by implication, West Indian criticism. Without a doubt, these two essays support the notion that the linguistic, social and philosophical ways of the folk carry within them patterns which not only deserve intense critical examination but which, when such examination is undertaken, also point to new directions for literary criticism as a whole.

One of the most useful functions of the regional-eclectic perspective is that it facilitates the yoking together of works that are polarized in terms of their individual claims to the status of great art. Thus the essays in the book's first section suggest the "historical contexts" which unite writers as different in artistic sensibilities and accomplishment as George Lamming and Herbert G. DeLisser. In fact, one of the very healthy assumptions of the Fourth Annual Conference on West Indian Literature, out of which this book emerged, seems to have been that despite its great diversity of form and content, West Indian literature admits to the kind of psycho-cultural unity which is the basis of any burgeoning literary tradition.

Happily, this collection is evidence that West Indian literary criticism is itself beginning to burgeon. It is also evidence of the fact that a growing number of critics are accepting the challenge of reconciling the often well-achieved world of West Indian writers with the state of culture in their "developing" society, even as that society wrestles with the challenge of liberating itself from an inherited and entrenched colonialism.

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*Slave emancipation in Cuba: the transition to free labor, 1860-1899.* REBECCA J. SCOTT. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985. xviii + 319 pp. (Cloth, US\$ 44.00; Paper, US\$ 13.95.)

When the French Caribbean colony of St. Domingue fell from preeminence in the production of sugar following its internal upheavals during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the nearby Spanish colony of Cuba moved rapidly to take its place. In 1868 Cuba produced more than 40 per cent of the sugar on the world market. Most of the workers whose labor made this possible were slaves. But at this very juncture in the history of the sugar and slavery linkage in Cuba, slavery began to be dismantled, slowly, piece by piece, many years after general emancipation had been instituted in other parts of the Americas, except Puerto Rico and Brazil. Final emancipation in Cuba came in 1886. The developments between 1868 and 1886 which encapsulate the society's transition from slave to free labor can only be fully understood if they are perceived as intermingled parts of a complex process, oversimplification of which might lead to grave misinterpretation. After emancipation, Cuban sugar production reached record levels. "This



congruence of events," writes Rebecca Scott, "raises questions about the relationship between slavery and the development of sugar production in Cuba, and about why emancipation came when and as it did." (p. 3). Scott's book is devoted to posing and answering these and related questions about the transition to free labor in Cuba.

Scott acknowledges that several approaches to an explanation of emancipation are possible. Some of these might emphasize particular elements within a much larger network, such as the "political process, largely carried out by Spain in response to the domestic and international pressures that arose" (p. 5) in relation to slavery, or the economics of slavery which persuaded some planters that free labor was more advantageous than slave labor. Correctly perceiving that the most challenging (indeed, perhaps the most central) question of Cuban emancipation is why it took so long to come about, Scott, in addition to considering pressures brought to bear upon the Spanish government, prefers to cast a wide net, to evaluate the links between the behavior of as many of the important *dramatis personae* as possible including slaves, freedmen, insurgents, administrators, planters, and free workers who had never been slaves. Each of these parties was affected by social, economic, political, and military pressures during the evolution of the dynamics of emancipation.

To explain this dynamic Scott divides her book into three parts. The first and second parts detail the early, and later stages of emancipation with an emphasis on an interpretation of its halting nature and the roles played by the involved parties. In the process the author takes issue with the interpretation of Moreno Fraginals that the incompatibility of slave labor with advanced technology of sugar production explains the disintegration of slavery. The Fraginals thesis implies an inflexibility in slave labor utilization that is debatable. Scott concludes that it is "difficult to see how, in an industry such as sugar, the juxtaposition of advanced technology and a subjugated work force can be seen as, in itself, contradictory and bound to lead to crisis, though one might argue that slavery's effects on the larger society would block economic development in a wider sense" (p. 28). Part three of the book correctly and carefully follows Cuban developments through to the last decade of the nineteenth century in order to evaluate the results and implications of emancipation. Planters, not surprisingly, maneuvered to control free labor, but by this time the freedmen had achieved a degree of politicization that had been nurtured in part through the long period of gradual emancipation, to defend their freedom and to extend it against Spanish domination by participating in the Cuban War for Independence.

The history of slave emancipation in the Americas illustrates the different paths that processes for the dismantling of slavery took in response to various

influences that originated both from inside and outside the slave societies of the region. While Scott acknowledges that it is not easy to compare emancipation in Cuba and elsewhere in general terms, she is aware of the comparative implications of her arguments and findings, and she does highlight some distinctive features of the Cuban situation that would interest scholars of other societies. These features include the political context within which Cuban emancipation unfolded, the status of the sugar industry, and the nature of Spanish and Cuban abolitionism, although some readers may wish that there had been a more elaborate discussion of the last.

Some of Scott's arguments also urge scholars to reconsider the roles that slaves and freedmen played in emancipation in other societies by showing convincingly that in Cuba, while imperial policy makers and Cuban planters and administrators may have inched emancipation along in order to minimize the dislocations of too sudden change that would undermine their power and interests, they had to contend with the intentions and expectations of the slaves and, later, the *patrocinados* (apprentices), who had different ideas about freedom. Scott argues persuasively, with a penetration that reflects a firm grasp of the roots and implications of the social relations of slavery, that the slaves and *patrocinados*, acting out of highly developed levels of political consciousness, "altered and accelerated" emancipation, employing different initiatives over time to press their claims and to exploit weak points in the crumbling edifice of slavery. Her discussion of the problems of the *patrocinados* should lead to a fresh look at the apprentices of the British sugar islands between 1834 and 1838 through the identification of new questions and the consultation of plantation-based sources. And when she talks about the significant impact of the regional variation of the sugar industry and plantation agriculture in Cuba, one wonders about the utility of this approach to other large Caribbean sugar territories such as Jamaica.

This important study, revisionist in tone and based upon impressive research in the archives of Spain, Cuba, and elsewhere, is closely argued, well-documented, finely-textured, and insightful. It sets the high standard by which all other studies of emancipation should be evaluated for a long time to come. Scott has succeeded in throwing much needed light on the history of the evolution of Cuban society during the second half of the nineteenth century, and she has contributed greatly, with cogent argument and persuasive evidence, to the growing debate about the process of emancipation and the character of post-slave society in the Americas.

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*Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934.* LOUIS A. PEREZ, JR. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986. xvii + 410 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95)

At the end of the Spanish-American War, in 1898, the United States assumed that its uninvited participation in the conflict carried with it a duty to establish a Cuban government suitably sympathetic to foreign interests before it withdrew its troops from the island. Although the United States ended its four-year military occupation of Cuba in 1902 it continued to exercise protectorate privileges through the provisions of the Platt Amendment. The Amendment, grafted onto the Cuban constitution, allowed the United States to oversee all aspects of the political, economic, and social life of the newly independent nation. Designed chiefly to ensure that the "better class" of white property owners ruled Cuba, rather than the largely Afro-Cuban "revolutionary" element, the Amendment provided for renewed military intervention if the political stability deemed necessary for the unrestrained growth of U.S. trade and investments appeared threatened.

In this new study of the Platt Amendment, Louis A. Perez, Jr. expands on his earlier work, *Intervention, Revolution, and Politics in Cuba, 1913-1921*, and incorporates Cuban archival materials apparently unavailable in the late 1970s. Perez skillfully explores the changes in U.S. and Cuban perceptions of the Amendment and shows how, during the period between 1902 and 1933, the American view swung from a narrow "defensive" military interpretation to a far broader "preventative" political or economic interpretation and back again. His examination of the changing conditions which enabled the United States to continually enforce the Amendment in various ways for nearly thirty years makes this well-researched book a welcome and valuable addition to the literature on Cuba under the protectorate.

After recalling its troops in 1902 the U.S. intervened militarily in 1906, 1917, and again 1918, to maintain collaborationist governments, such as Estrada Palma's Moderates, or to suppress incipient rebellions and strikes which threatened American business interests. From 1909 onwards, Perez points out, the U.S. proved less willing to await an actual crisis before intervening in Cuban affairs and reinterpreted the Amendment to allow for "preventative" intervention either through military, diplomatic, or economic means. Such measures included the supervision of elections, strike breaking, attempts to prevent the liberalization of marriage and divorce laws, and threats to block desperately needed loans unless Cuban cabinet nominees met with U.S. approval. In future any real or imagined threat to U.S. capital investments would be construed as an excuse for interference.

As the United States adjusted and amplified its application of the Amendment, Cuban officials began to appreciate the possibilities for manipulating it

to suit their own purposes. While incumbent officials demanded U.S. protection for their constituted authority, opposition parties claimed that loss of freedom through electoral fraud could lead to rebellion and endanger U.S. property. Thus rival politicians invoked the Amendment in their efforts to gain political ascendancy.

Perez does not confine himself solely to the political aspects of the Amendment. His analysis of the economic and social problems which beset Cuba during this period clearly illustrates its impact on the Cuban working classes. As the U.S. expanded its industrial capacity and increased its foreign trade after the first World War, North American capitalists and policymakers collaborated to an even greater degree. The efforts of Cuban labor to unionize and negotiate for improved conditions and higher wages appeared subversive and communistic to the United States which pressured the Cuban government to crush strikes, suppress unions, and harass militant labor leaders. Stable government came to mean quiescent labor and the Amendment became a virtual assurance that North American investors would continue to reap the benefits of a cheap and apparently malleable work force. Henceforth the Amendment could be invoked to maintain, rather than simply restore, stable conditions.

The collapse of world sugar prices in 1920 enabled the United States to extend its control over the Cuban economy still further. The American-owned National City and Chase National banks foreclosed on heavily encumbered sugar estates thereby gaining dozens of mills and hastening the concentration of Cuba's sugar industry in the hands of U.S. banks. Through judicious purchase, other American owned companies, such as ITT, gained control of the island's power and communications systems. By the end of the decade many North American manufacturers had opened subsidiary companies which successfully eliminated much of their Cuban competition.

During the 1920s a new class of Cuban businessmen emerged which claimed access to political office. But government officials showed little concern for local needs preferring instead to continue catering to foreign capital. Together with students and workers, the new entrepreneurial class increasingly attacked the widening coverage of the Amendment and added its bitter opposition to the treaty to the growing anti-American sentiment prevalent throughout Latin America. When U.S. Ambassador Sumner Welles attempted to force Gerardo Machado's resignation in 1933, the Cuban President angrily refused and, amid the resultant mixture of a general strike, nationalist fervor, and fear of revolution, dared the U.S. to intervene militarily once more. But attitudes within the United States had also changed. North American capitalists recognized that armed intervention endangered their Cuban investments more than diplomatic conciliation.

By 1933 the Platt Amendment had outlived its usefulness and, over the objections of the United States, was finally repudiated by Ramón Grau San Martín on the day he became president of the Republic. Yet despite many adjustments, reinterpretations, and Cuba's eventual unilateral abrogation, the Amendment had served the purposes of its authors for nearly three decades. As Perez ably points out, it served to promote U.S. interests in Cuba and to maintain "acceptable" local elites, thereby preserving the old colonial system virtually intact. Moreover its effects influenced U.S.-Cuban relations for at least another generation and its painful memories continue to linger.

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*La comisión del status de Puerto Rico: su historia y significación.* IDSA E. ALEGRIA ORTEGA. Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria. 1982. ix + 214 pp. (Paper, US\$ 6.00)

Ms. Alegría's study is a good introduction to Puerto Rico's perennial political status problem. Its title notwithstanding, the study is not limited to the 1964-1966 U.S.-P.R. Status Commission. The book is a broad summary of the events that led to the establishment of the Commission, a summary of the findings, and an analysis of the outcome and implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

Alegría is generally objective in her presentation although she clearly favors independence for Puerto Rico. Commonwealth advocates are labeled "opportunistic" and "submissive" (pp. 104, 106, 116), while statehood advocates "do not believe that Puerto Ricans are capable of solving their own problems" (p. 102). Independence advocates on the other hand, are "the national liberation forces" (pp. 137, 185). This label, it should be noted, is unacceptable to the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño because it connotes armed struggle, which they condemn.

In many ways this study is but a review of available materials (up to 1972, and some until 1984) on the status problem. As such it is valuable. To the uninitiated to the labyrinths of Puerto Rican politics and for readers who want to avoid the Status Commission's mammoth publications, Alegría's book is a painless and succinct solution.

The book, though, is hampered by several problems. Originally a dissertation, the book retains that format. The research was finished in 1974 but the

book was published in 1982. Lacunas in the bibliography reflect this eight year hiatus. A 16 page epilogue merely updates events without any in-depth analysis. Some glaring omissions are Loida Figueroa's *El caso de Puerto Rico a nivel internacional*, (Hato Rey, P.R.; Editorial Edil, Inc., 1979), and the U.S. Congress Hearings on *Terroristic activity. The Cuban connection in Puerto Rico; Castro's hand in Puerto Rican and U.S. terrorism* (94th Congress, 1st sess., 1975). Nor does the bibliography include the wealth of materials on Puerto Rico's status question found in Cuban publications such as *Granma* and publications by Casa las Américas. These are important omissions since the author explicitly sets out to study the efforts and accomplishments of pro-independence groups in international forums as they relate to events in Puerto Rico (p. vi).

The decade of the 1960's is one of the most significant periods in Puerto Rico's twentieth century political history. It was marked by drastic changes in party affiliation (e.g. the disappearance of a dominant one-party system and appearance of a two-party system), by the erosion of the Commonwealth as a legitimate and accepted international solution to Puerto Rico's political status, and by the use of systematic political violence to protest U.S. presence on the island and as a means to achieve independence. Alegría analyzes but one aspect of these changes: the erosion of the Commonwealth at the United Nations. There is not a single reference to the unusual political violence that racked the island from 1964 to 1971. The changing pattern of political party preferences is indirectly studied when presenting electoral results. But, there is no systematic study nor analysis of voting patterns.

The reader has the distinct impression that the Commissions's hearings occurred in a vacuum. There is a complete absence of data relating to economic and social conditions on the island – except in terms of the future economic, cultural, and social impact of different status options. Significant events are neglected completely: it is almost as if the Cuban Revolution had not occurred, triggering a veritable exodus of Cuban nationals to Puerto Rico.

Elections and party politics take a sizable amount of space (Chapters VII and IX – the reader should be aware that the Table of Contents lists Chapter IX as part of Chapter VIII). Electoral results are presented for the 1964, 1968, 1972, 1976, and 1980 elections. But, it is almost impossible for the uninitiated to understand why electoral results reflect: an erosion of the popularity of the Commonwealth party; an unchanging 3% to 4% vote for independence; and almost a doubling of the vote-getting appeal of the statehood parties during the period. A case in point is the analysis of the 1967 status plebiscite.

The 1967 plebiscite enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the Commonwealth advocates, was boycotted by the Partido Independentista, and the

Partido Estadista was hopelessly split. When the results were in, 360,056 voters had abstained. Alegría asserts: "It is obvious that a great part of the abstention came from independence advocates" (p. 98). How can one make this assertion when the independence party only obtained 24,729 votes in the 1968 elections? That is, an increase of 20,481 over the vote in the plebiscite? Votes for the statehood option though, rose from 274,312 votes in the 1967 plebiscite to 390,992 in the 1968 election: an increase of 116,680 votes (pp. 98-99).

Similarly, some of Alegría's comments leave the reader wondering. For example, the author quotes Luis Muñoz Marín: "We have to free ourselves from a confrontation between the political ideas of independence and statehood, both honorable but equally unrealistic solutions to our political destiny". The author then asserts that Muñoz was using "scare tactics" (p. 160). Why is saying that Puerto Ricans should avoid a confrontation between statehood and independence scary? And if it is, why was it successful? Unless the reader is aware of the polarization brought about by events in the 1960's (e.g. the communist scare engendered by Cuba's Marxist revolution), none of this makes any sense.

In spite of its shortcomings, Alegría's book is valuable specially for those concerned primarily with the legal aspects of the political status of Puerto Rico. But, an explanation of why the U.S.-P.R. Status Commission failed to solve the political status of Puerto Rico would entail: a legal analysis; a political analysis of forces operating in Puerto Rico, in the U.S., and in the international environment; and, equally important, an analysis of the Puerto Rican political, economic, and social culture. Only by understanding Puerto Ricans can one start to fathom why the political status is a problem and why Puerto Rico's political parties proclaimed "status is not an issue" as the way to insure victory in the elections covered by the study (pp. 164, 180).

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*Changer la Martinique: initiation à l'économie des Antilles.* JEAN CRUSOL.  
Paris: Editions Caribéennes, 1986. 96 pp (Cloth, 50 F)

In less than a hundred pages, Jean Crusol offers us an accessible analysis of Martinique's economy and of its future prospects. The text is based on a television series broadcast between 1982 and 1985, and some of its defects

(e.g. no indication of sources, and a reasoning, at times either too facile or too rigid) originated there. Yet, a comparative analysis with the other Caribbean islands (well-known to the author [Crusol 1981]) allows him to highlight the specificities of Martinique's economy.

Since 1950, Martinique's net domestic product increased 27 times in current francs (1950–1982). In constant francs, one might say that the net domestic product per capita increased seven fold. Those increases placed Martinique among the Caribbean countries with the highest net domestic product per capita, with all due reservations about comparisons of that kind. This average domestic product, however, hides strong inequalities, about which we are barely starting to gather data (Diman-Antenor n.d.). Those inequalities seem stronger than those noted in France, but lower than those in all other Caribbean islands except Cuba.

The crucial fact is the artificial character of Martinique's "wealth", which rests on public transfer (*transferts publics*) rather than on activities of production. The term *public transfers* remains undefined: they hide the totality of outside financial aid from which proceeds the heavy dependence of a fragile and unbalanced economy (Buffon 1982). Barely diversified exports balance only a small fraction of the imports. To be sure, the driving force in all Caribbean island economies is external; but other islands (Barbados, Jamaica), though less rich, have an economy less artificial than that of Martinique: the main impulse comes from exports of goods and services, not from foreign aid. How did Martinique get to this point? That is the main question since, indeed, by 1949 the country imported only 20% of its consumer goods.

The blame must be put on the "Loi de Départementalisation" of 19 March 1946, which engulfed the four old colonies within the metropolis, and its subsequent applications through time. Crusol, following others, underlines three major developments: the expansion of public expenditures, a very small part of which relates to local production; competition from French-based firms encouraged by the public's preference for imported goods; the implementation of the labor and social laws of the metropolis, and the uncontrolled rise of production costs.

Few local firms can survive in such a context; new individuals, especially among the youth, must join the growing crowd of the many unemployed rejected by a hypertrophied tertiary sector.

Unfortunately, Crusol goes too fast over the disequilibria of the productive apparatus that stem from the growing importance of public transfers. Such transfers heavily contribute to maintain economic activity; but we have shown some time ago that revenues distributed through salaries or transfer payments help primarily the development of imports and of service activities



tied to the distribution of goods. Hence, unemployment reaches new thresholds: high rate (30%), the youth (2/3 of the unemployed are under 25), significant duration (20 month average). And underemployment must be added to unemployment itself: it would have been useful to note the many forms of labor underutilization, especially the cases of underemployment well documented by the INSEE surveys of 1967, 1971-72, 1979-80 (Domenach and Guengant 1981). For want of jobs, an important proportion of the youth cannot achieve full integration within society: hence the temptation of migration – officially organized, since 1963, by the creation of the Bureau for the development of migration from the Overseas Department (BUMIDOM). Since 1970, it deals with 5,000 people per year.

Clearly, such a situation cannot remain unchanged. Crusol too rapidly suggests three possible scenarios to finally retain only one. First, the economy might become even more dependent on transfers; the risk of major social upheavals will then augment. Second, a break with the metropolis would lead to the elimination of 80% of the jobs, social disturbances, massive emigration. (One regrets such hasty analyses: those issues deserve better appraisals.) Third, “the transformation and modification” of the economic structure of Martinique, the author’s chosen solution. He recommends measures aimed at temporarily protecting local enterprises so as to firmly increase both their competitiveness and their creativity.

This program, however, implies a sharp awareness of the attitudes that are obstacles to development. Crusol denounces particularly four of such attitudes: a lack of responsibility that expresses itself in practices such as lack of punctuality, job absenteeism, and the neglect of public places; “little taste for work let alone for work well done”; a negative attitude toward production, the lack of a sense “of risk and enterprise”; consumerism (here the work of Michael Louis [1981] would have been useful).

Those attitudes are reinforced by the actions of institutions which are not exactly meeting their intended purposes, given the current structures: the State, which distributes the aid, and whose agents have become a dominant social group, a bureaucracy uninterested in productivity and efficiency; the banking system, which allegedly looks for safe deals and quick returns; an unfit educational system; and the media, which are spreading the industrialized countries’ image of a consumer society.

Brief though they are, these observations point to key problems. Since Crusol refrains from tackling the political issues with which these problems are closely intertwined, his analysis is bound to remain less than satisfactory.

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(Translated from the French by Michel-Rolph Trouillot)

*Panama money in Barbados, 1900-1920*. BONHAM C. RICHARDSON. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985. xiv + 283 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.95).

In this outstandingly researched and well-written book, Bonham Richardson reaffirms a thesis developed in his earlier work (Richardson 1982, 1983), namely, that the long-distance movements of West Indian peoples "are not so much manifestations of world-wide, macroeconomic shifts or disequilibria as they are ongoing livelihood adaptations to ensure survival on small, worn-out" and resource-poor islands (Richardson 1983: 176).

This is not a book about West Indian labor and the construction of the Panama Canal, nor is it about the lives of Barbadian workers in Panama. Rather, the book attempts to explore the impact of Panama money in the Barbadian economy (1906-1920) and the role played by Panama returnees in the evolving social and political climate in the 1920s and 1930s. The Introduction sets the stage for the importance of Panama money in the turn-of-the-century British Caribbean, an area then caught in the grips of a "savage economic depression," and it establishes the fact that Barbados was the colony most affected by the canal construction, since an estimated one fifth of

the population emigrated to Panama, and almost half of the total 45,000 contract workers recruited by the Canal Commission were Barbadians. (The latter, Richardson contends, was due largely to a combination of circumstances and the efforts of William J. Karner, an American engineer in the Canal Zone). Chapter 2 focuses primarily on the political economy of Barbados at the turn of the century and explains how planter control over black rural estate workers was maintained through the parish vestry system. While this chapter is well-documented (a good mix of both primary and secondary sources), it could have been significantly strengthened through the judicious use of statistics from the *Colony (Barbados) Blue Books*. Chapter 3 is superbly crafted and evokes a vivid picture of the black rural and urban tenancies in the early 1900s – a period in which “Ned was in the land” (“desperate times had arrived and no relief was in sight” p. 73). These desperate times were made worse by the fact that a small-holder tradition was unable to develop in Barbados as almost all the arable land was tied up in large estates. (It was only in the 1920s and 1930s that a few large estates were divided up and small plots of land became available for sale). Lacking land as a buffer against economic vicissitudes, the black masses had to develop a variety of adaptive responses (resignation, food sharing, friendly societies, rotating credit associations, an intense religiosity, etc.) to cushion their plight. One of the most important adaptive responses, Richardson contends, was migration, undertaken, primarily, to maintain families at home. Chapter 4 explores Panama fever as a continuation of a migration tradition that began in the nineteenth century, enumerates the number of emigrants to Panama (20,000 contract workers plus an estimated 25,000 non-contract workers) and the number of returnees, and details the planters’ reaction to the loss of labor. Returning men and returning money are the subject of Chapter 5. Richardson suggests that the stereotype of the Panama returnee (ostentatious, rebellious, crippled by a work-related accident) could only be applied to a minority, since the average returnee simply resumed his estate job, and, except for having saved a small amount of money, had changed little. Returning money (via mail or friends) was barely sufficient to support family left behind, but often it made the difference and helped tide family and other relatives over critical periods. The amounts carried home on termination of contract were far greater, and in many cases sufficient to make a down payment on land (indispensable to economic emancipation), buy a chattel house, or invest in a small business. The infusion of Panama money into Barbados hastened the emergence of a cash-oriented economy, resuscitated friendly societies and, most importantly, enabled thousands of black Barbadians to achieve upward mobility. Those returnees who were most affected by the migration experience also had a significant impact on the evolving social

and political relations between the black masses and the proprietary members of society. Increasing rates of lawlessness and a new assertiveness among the poor were attributed to the influence of returnees. Returnees were also implicated in helping launch new social and political organizations (fundamentalist churches, the landship movement, neighborhood associations) and in the emergence of working class consciousness in the 1920s, which was to provide, according to Richardson, the "underpinnings" for the Bridgetown riots of 1937 (Chapter 7).

The loss of labor during the Panama years also benefitted the Barbados sugar industry since it forced the transformation of an ailing and antiquated system dependent on cheap and compliant labor, into a more viable industry based on central milling and improved production techniques. In summary, Richardson argues that migration to Panama revived a moribund economy, promoted the economic emancipation of many black Barbadians, and significantly altered the social and political climate, allowing for a greater assertiveness on the part of the black masses.

*Panama Money* represents a salutary effort to judiciously combine archival materials, oral accounts and secondary sources. One problem with eliciting oral accounts of the Panama era in the 1980s is that "asking elderly informants about recollections of their parents, many of whom died decades ago, hardly constitutes a search for objective evidence" (pp. 153-54), but to Richardson's credit, these recollections are interwoven with archival data and written accounts and they provide convincing support for his thesis that the exodus to Panama was a "creative act of individual and group volition" (p. 8) by black Barbadians intent on improving their life chances. I highly recommend this book to Caribbeanists as a sterling example of the kind of migration research that is rich in data and sensitive, not only to the particular set of circumstances actual or potential migrants found themselves in, but also to the broader structural and historical circumstances that propelled many black West Indians across the Caribbean sea. When discussing the latter, Richardson cannot help but take a dig at a lot of the currently fashionable migration writing that is curiously bereft of data and bent on reifying individual/group choice, motives and experience, to vindicate a myopic view of the movement of labor as *always* a historically specific response to a particular mode of production.

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*Society and health in Guyana: the sociology of health care in a developing nation*. MARCEL FREDERICKS, JOHN LENNON, PAUL MUNDY, and JANET FREDERICKS. Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1986. xv + 173 pp. (Cloth US\$ 22.75)

Written by a team of three sociologists and a specialist in education, this book presents a descriptive account of the development and present state of health care in Guyana. The topics covered in the eight chapters of this short work are an introduction to Guyana, health services, public health services, health education, Hansen's disease, physicians, folk medicine, and changing health care. Approximately one-third of the body of the book consists of the texts of radio talks, speeches, and newspaper articles by several distinguished Guyanese physicians, particularly by Dr. George Giglioli, a pioneer in the use of DDT spraying to eradicate malaria. Following the chapters are a series of fifteen appendices, a list of recommended readings, and a glossary.

*Society and health in Guyana* is so poorly conceived, written, and edited that the book has little to recommend it other than its brevity (100 pages of text; 52 pages of appendices). Written by the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Guyana, the foreword to the book provides a foretaste of things to come. This section consists of an unintelligible first paragraph on change and development, a political statement, and a closing paragraph in which the Honorary Consul offers the less than revealing comment that the book is "interesting" (p. viii). A few pages later, a list of illustrations appears in which the numbers of pages with illustrations are listed in seemingly random order.

Like the page numbers on this list, much of the text of the book consists of *non sequiturs*, that is, of materials that are either out of place in the book or do not belong in the book at all. Thus the chapter on "Hansen's disease in Guyana" is no more than a newspaper account written by a Guyanese physician describing the general effects of the disease upon its victims but mentioning nothing about the disease in Guyana. This chapter is sandwiched

between one on "health education in Guyana" and another on "physicians in Guyana". The chapter on health education actually ignores the subject of health education and merely discusses in general terms the educational system of Guyana before concluding with the text of a speech by Dr. Giglioli about the dearth of medical research in Guyana. The chapter on physicians mentions a few rather idealistic responses to a survey conducted among Guyanese physicians and then briefly profiles four prominent (?) physicians (one profile is a speech by Dr. Giglioli). Of one such physician, an American who occasionally visits Guyana, the reader learns that on one visit he saw two patients, a two-year old boy with a cleft palate and an eight-year old boy with deformed hands. The doctor operated successfully upon both patients and then (p. 22) "saw a number of other patients on a consulting basis". These paragraph-length profiles are not only trivial but even fail to provide time frames, so the reader can only speculate whether the physicians who are mentioned continue to practice in Guyana or are long since deceased.

*Society and health in Guana* is full of trivial, irrelevant, unanalyzed, and dislocated data. A section on tuberculosis (p. 22) concludes with a discussion of mental illness. The chapter on folk medicine arbitrarily lists some folk cures of Guyana but makes no serious effort to indicate which folk – Black, Chinese, Portuguese, East Indian, or American Indian – make use of them or to describe the religious and other contexts in which cures are undertaken. (Even a section of the first chapter that does attempt to describe "culture in Guyana" does so only in a desultory manner, offering vague and unconnected information about education, foods, hospitality, East Indian weddings, and hospital visits by the families of patients.)

The final chapter on "changing health care in a changing Guyana" contains major sections on the relationship among families, social change, and the role of the sick within families, but neglects to relate any of the material presented to Guyana except to suggest that all three elements occur there. The last section of the chapter includes several tables comparing the recent fall in the birth and death rates of Guyana to a similar decline in the U.S. On a rare analytic note, the authors conclude (p. 98): "In the theater of its own national life, each [country] has looked forward to a time when it could say, 'Death be not proud!'"

Of the fifteen appendices that follow, but are not mentioned in the text, eight come from a work entitled *Guyana in brief* (attributed to the Guyana National Lithographic Co. Ltd., 1979). The appendices are devoted to such miscellaneous and unnecessary topics as the "national flag of Guyana", "constituent assembly", and "major industries in Guyana". An appendix entitled "local substitutes for foods unavailable in Guyana" is a list with thirteen numbered entries including (p. 139) "cashew apples for raw apples in Waldorf salads."

I find it difficult to determine the readership for which this book is intended. Certainly, the book has some information about the structure of medical services in Guyana. However, because the discussion is sometimes unclear and often leads nowhere and because much of the information presented derives from other published sources, it will probably be of limited value to most readers. More illuminating are the texts of speeches by Dr. Giglioli, but these appear mostly as intrusions in an already confused and rambling text. Regrettably, I must disagree with the Honorary Consul: this book is not interesting, except perhaps as an example of a decline in contemporary standards of editing and publishing

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